# Public Theology in a Foreign Land: A Proposal for Bringing Theology in Public into the Spanish Context

Author: Gonzalo Villagran

**Boston College School of Theology and Ministry**

# Public Theology in a Foreign Land:
A Proposal for Bringing Theology in Public into the Spanish Context

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By
**Gonzalo Villagrán, S.J.**

Directed by
**Thomas J. Massaro, S.J.**

Readers
**David Hollenbach, S.J.**
**James Keenan, S.J.**

Examiner
**Paul C. Manuel**

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**Boston College School of Theology and Ministry**

## ABSTRACT

In the U.S. theological context since the 1970's, the current called "public theology" has offered a very interesting proposal for the church to be present in society. In its Catholic variant, this current is very much inspired by the American theologian David Tracy. Applied to the context of Spain, this variant could clarify the relationship between Spanish citizenship and Catholic identity. However, in order to be applied to the context of Spain, this current needs to be put in dialogue with the two other major actors in Spanish society: (1) unbelief, and (2) the Islamic tradition. The issue of unbelief has been the focus of the French moral theologian Paul Valadier. His anthropological framework based on conscience could help public theology to respond to the main secularistic critics. The work of five major modern Islamic social thinkers: Abdulaziz Sachedina, Nurcolish Majid, Adullahi An-Naim, Tariq Ramadan, and Alli Allawi —each of whom have attempted to integrate modern social values with Islamic tradition—provide resources for public theologians to address the Muslim tradition from within the Christian theological stance. By incorporating the insights of these two conversations, public theology presents a new and very interesting proposal for the Church in Spain to be present in the social debates. Integrating Valadier's concern for conscience into Tracy's critical correlational approach offers a suitable theological method. To incorporate Islam into the conversation we should put some previous conditions (the category of public religion) and we should agree on a goal for interreligious dialogue (the pluralistic common good). This method could be the way for the Church in Spain to develop a discourse rooted in Christian identity but understandable by modern Spanish pluralistic society.

*There is no finer and no worse people in the world.*

*No kinder people and no crueler. And who understands them?*

*Not me, because if I did I would forgive it all.*

*To understand is to forgive. That's not true.*

*Forgiveness has been exaggerated.*

*Forgiveness is a Christian idea*

*and Spain has never been a Christian country.*

**Ernest Hemingway. *For Whom the Bells Tolls***

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation is a response to a personal concern. Being born the same year that democracy was definitely established in Spain, 1975, I have been a witness of how a young and enthusiastic democratic project has evolved over time. Because of my faith, I have seen, with joy and pride, the major role that the Catholic Church and individual Christians played in the peaceful transition to democracy and the building of the constitutional framework. However, I have also seen how, over time, because of the social changes in Spain, the Church became a stranger for many Spaniards and its voice in society was perceived as a foreign cry. This situation has pushed many in the Church to take confrontational attitudes toward society that seem to contrast with the position Christians held during the transition to democracy. Being witness to all these processes has urged me to look for ways for the Church to retrieve the stance it held during the transition to democracy. This contribution of the Church can benefit a society so much in need of hearing the Good News of Jesus Christ about its social, political and economic situation. This motivation is at the foundation of this dissertation.

At the end of this journey it is time to acknowledge all the help I have received along the way. I am indebted to Professor Thomas Massaro, S.J. for advising me in this dissertation. His constant support, availability and understanding have been invaluable in order to overcome the many difficulties during this job. I am also most thankful to my readers, Professor James Keenan, S.J. and Professor David Hollenbach, S.J. first of all, for their insightful comments and feedback on my work which helped me to find my way in the

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Because English is not my first language I have needed much help in order to write this dissertation. The patience and generous help of Glenn Williams, S.J. (+) and Simon Smith, S.J. with the English language is a major reason why this dissertation is complete. I am deeply indebted to them. Many thanks finally to all my fellow Jesuit companions who on many occasions have supported and encouraged me during these years.

Finally, I dedicate this work to my parents, Álvaro and Victoria, to my brother Álvaro, my sister Victoria and her husband Alfonso. I dedicate it particularly to my nephew Alfonso, who I hope one day will continue the positive Christian contribution to Spanish society.

## INTRODUCTION

In March 2011, as a way to protest against the presence of a Catholic chapel on the campus of the Complutense University in Madrid, Spain's main public university, a group of 70 students broke forcibly into the chapel. After positioning themselves around the altar, the women in the group stripped to their waists while they all shouted slogans against the Catholic Church and Catholic priests.[1]

In November 2011, the public University of Granada created a chair of theology. This development brought theology back to the Spanish public university more than a century and a half after it was expelled.[2] This new chair has produced a great controversy with some laicist groups which demand the termination of such a chair. They argue that theology has no place in the university because it is not a science, it affirms that miracles exist, and it does not seek truth, main requirements to justify presence at the university.[3]

Events like these demonstrate the great complexity of the Spanish social context regarding the public presence of the Catholic Church in society. This complexity is the result of a long history of inadequately clarified relationship between Spanish cultural identity and the Catholic faith. This history has culminated in a strong rejection of the

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[1] ABC, "Desnudas en la capilla de la Universidad Complutense", March 11, 2011, http://www.abc.es/20110311/madrid/abcp-desnudas-capilla-universidad-complutense-20110311.html.

[2] Universidad de Granada, "Cátedra de Teología > Actividades", 2010, http://catedras.ugr.es/catedrateologia/pages/actividades.

[3] María José Frápolli, "Por qué la teología no es una ciencia," *Laicismo.org. El Observatorio de la Laicidad*, February 8, 2012, http://www.laicismo.org/detalle.php?pk=11800&tp=ds.

Catholic Church in some contexts. This history is now taking a new turn with the growing presence of other religions in Spain, particularly Muslims. It is not hard to perceive that the presence of so much tension and prejudice conditions any public work of the Catholic Church on social issues and makes it very difficult to convey a Christian view on social issues to Spanish society. I would contend that the present Spanish social situation is clamoring for a new way for the Church to exist in society and to overcome these strong critiques and reactions, while preserving the church's contribution to the common good of society. What is needed is a new way of being in society that allows the Church also to dialogue with our new Muslim fellow citizens. We have to step back for a moment and, before addressing the strong social problems of Spain –immigration, social exclusion, maintenance of the welfare state, the quality of political life — we have to reflect on the way we propose to discuss them. Avoiding this effort may cause a misunderstanding and rejection of our message and advice to society before they even receive the hearing. This social situation is the starting point for this dissertation.

## I. ORIGINS OF THE WORK

The concerns to which I refer are not new to the Spanish theological *milieu*. We can identify among Spanish theologians an effort in the last fifteen years to review the methods by which the Catholic Church intervenes in society. We can locate the beginning of this revision with the publication of Antonio González's *Teología de la Praxis Evangélica* in 1999,[4] a critical revision of the liberation theology paradigm. González reviewed liberation

[4] Antonio González, *Teología de la praxis evangélica: Ensayo de una teología fundamental* (Maliaño: Sal Terrae, 1999).

theology introducing a larger role for Scripture and Christology, that is to say, highlighting the Christian identity of the message. González later developed his ideas into a full social theology in his subsequent 2003 book *Reinado de Dios e Imperio*.[5] In a similar vein, in the year 2004, the Jesuit social review *Revista de Fomento Social* published a series of articles reflecting a debate between two theologians concerned with social issues: Daniel Izuzquiza and Ildefonso Camacho.[6] Izuzquiza pointed out the realization that in contemporary secularized Spanish society there were no real differences between the common behavior of believers and unbelievers.[7] He then presented a revision of liberation theology in light of Stanley Hauerwas, John Milbank and the Catholic Worker Movement. Izuzquiza's position goes in the direction of claiming a public presence of the Church which supposes an alternative to the liberal-capitalist system.[8] Ildefonso Camacho, an expert in Catholic social teaching, pointed out the risk in Izuzquiza's position of confusing three major concepts: church, society and kingdom of God.[9] He reminds us about the Second Vatican Council's reinterpretation of the mission of the church as being a sacrament. This supposes that the

[5] Antonio González, *Reinado de Dios e imperio: Ensayo de teología social* (Maliaño: Sal Terrae, 2003). It is possible to perceive in this book a transition from a Catholic approach to social issues toward a more Anabaptist approach.

[6] Daniel Izuzquiza, "De la liberación a la resistencia. Una mirada a la teología de la liberación desde el corazón del imperio," *Revista De Fomento Social* 59, no. 235 (2004): 521–551; Ildefonso Camacho, "'De la liberación a la resistencia'. Un comentario," *Revista de Fomento Social* 59, no. 235 (2004): 671–683; Daniel Izuzquiza, "¿Alternativa cristiana como resistencia al imperio? Respuesta a Ildefonso Camacho," *Revista de Fomento Social* 59, no. 236 (2004): 841–852.

[7] Cf. Izuzquiza, "De la liberación a la resistencia. Una mirada a la teología de la liberación desde el corazón del imperio," 540.

[8] Cf. Ibid., 533.

[9] Cf. Camacho, "'De la liberación a la resistencia'. Un comentario," 682.

church is public and relevant for society but not an imposition on society. Finally, Izuzquiza closed the debate by identifying his position and Camacho's with two different post-Vatican II understandings of the relationship between the Church and the world: a modern secular Christianity (represented by Camacho) and a "Meta-modern" radical Christianity (represented by his position). The difference between them is based on the understanding of the nature-supernatural relationship.[10] In my opinion, this discussion shows how the Spanish theological *milieu* has identified a crisis in the post-Vatican II more Rahnerian paradigm as the result of the enormous changes in Spanish society in terms of strong secularization and growing pluralism.

These debates were on my mind when I started my studies for the Canonical License in Theology in the Jesuit Theology Faculty, Centre Sèvres, in Paris. I came into contact there with the work of several contemporary U.S. Catholic ethicists identified with a certain style of theology called public theology and the role of U.S. theologian David Tracy in it. This discovery was extremely enlightening to me. I perceived in public theology initiatives an honest effort to face the questions that I felt were at the bottom of the Spanish debate: the concern for a Christian ethics more thoroughly rooted in Scripture and Christian life, but at the same time one that attempts to be open and compelling for a pluralistic society. I would not claim that it answers every question posed in the Spanish debate, but I believe this movement is an important contribution to the debate that was missing in the Spanish theological context and can help locate a middle path within it. When thinking about a

[10] Cf. Izuzquiza, "¿Alternativa cristiana como resistencia al imperio? Respuesta a Ildefonso Camacho," 844ff.

possible subject for my dissertation, it was clear to me that probing this new style of theology and applying it to my home context had to play a major role.

This dissertation seeks to contribute to the present debate about social ethics in the Spanish theological context, introducing this line of theology, public theology, which I hope may offer a new and more integrated perspective on the issues at stake. Therefore I decided to phrase the issue at stake in my dissertation in the following way: How can contemporary Christianity, especially the Catholic Church, address public social issues by drawing insights directly from our faith and religious symbols in modern Spanish society? In order to answer this question, I wanted to draw from the current of public theology in the U.S. while making it appropriate for a Spanish society that displays vast differences.

## II. METHOD

The methodology of this work strives to be faithful to the etymology of the word and be a *meta-hodos:* a path to follow. I identify a starting point for my work and I set the destination. The starting point is the U.S. theological movement called public theology, in all its heterogeneity. The destination is Spanish society, the particular context upon which and for which I am reflecting. This work seeks to walk that way touching the major milestones of this path: the dialogue with secularization and the dialogue with Islam.

I start then by approaching the term public theology, trying to clarify the different authors and positions behind it. This effort leads me to discover the work of David Tracy as a major reference point inspiring the writings of several Catholic ethicists such as David

Hollenbach, John Coleman and Michael and Kenneth Himes. I adopt this position as the main inspiration for my work.

But the European intellectual *milieu* is very different from that of the U.S., and secularization is a very important condition within it. Therefore, at the next milestone, I compare one particular method within public theology, the critical-correlational one, with the work of another theologian who has been pursuing a similar goal but in highly secularized societies. Regarding this, I chose to use the work of Paul Valadier as this reference point. The classes I took with Paul Valadier in the Centre Sèvres revealed to me the strong philosophical potential of his reflection and his acute understanding of the dynamics of secularization. Because of this I wanted him to be the touchstone of my theological approach when dealing with the European reality.

Contemporary pluralistic Spanish society should not be reduced to a conflict between belief and unbelief. Spanish society is marked not only by the disenchantment process but also by religious and cultural pluralism. The presence of other religions, particularly the Muslim tradition, supposes then an important element that should be integrated in the picture. Therefore, I considered it necessary to bring in the Muslim tradition, in order to develop a proposal capable of responding to the future challenges of Spain's growing pluralism. A theology done in public in Spain in the future should be able to take this religious tradition into account if it is to be credible in front of the other societal actors. After collecting some information on this issue I decided not to opt for one single author but to contrast the position in public theology I was following with a set of Muslim authors

who could represent a modern and open position within the Muslim tradition on social issues.

And finally, we arrive at the destination of our path, of our method: contemporary Spanish society. I tried here to define the conditions of this context in order to have a better understanding of the possibilities and limits of a public theology done in this setting. In each of the chapters, a final section called "guidelines for a public theology in Spain" tries to pull together all the insights for the goal of our work that we can draw from the chapter. In the final chapter, a single dedicated section collects all these insights from previous chapters, presenting a synthesis of what a theology done in public in Spain could look like.

## III. WAY OF PROCEEDING

The structure of the chapters in the dissertation tries to reflect this path we wanted to tread from the theological views on the U.S. context to the Spanish reality. Each chapter represents a step along this path.

In the first chapter, called "public theology at home," I present an overview of the U.S. authors around the term public theology, trying to identify their connections and mutual influences as well as the method they are using. My approach to these authors will show us how the term public theology should be understood as a style of theology which speaks to the public sphere on social issues using theological arguments that can be understood by everyone. However, I will identify a particular method for doing public theology, based on David Tracy's critical-correlational model, which is the one that inspires the work of the

Catholic authors doing theology in public. This method will remain a major asset of our proposal.

In the second chapter, called "can we do theology in a disenchanted world?" I will present the thought of the French moral theologian Paul Valadier on the relationship between church and society. I will show how he can be considered a public theologian even if he has never embraced that term. Evaluating his work in light of the public theology concerns, I will show how he can offer this current a robust anthropological framework based on the tradition of Catholic moral theology, particularly the concept of conscience. Because he does not really consider how to introduce religious symbols and narratives in the argument, we may see him as a complement of the critical-correlational method for our purposes. Tracy gives us a method to build our arguments on social issues using religious symbols and narratives. Valadier would offer us a way to frame that argument and address it to European secularized societies.

In the third chapter, called "will 'the other' understand our public theology?" I will present the thought of five major Muslim social thinkers. These five authors represent some prominent Muslims' efforts to integrate main modern political philosophy values such as democracy or human rights. These can be considered the Muslim tradition's growing edge. The approach to the work of these representatives of the Muslim tradition will tell us how our public theology should be developed in order to integrate dialogue with this tradition so important in Spain right now. We will see how this dialogue requires us to develop Tracy's position setting a subject matter of the conversation, the search for the pluralistic common

good, and assuring the pluralism of the conversation requiring the different traditions to fulfill the category of a public religion.

In the fourth and final chapter, called "the foreign land," I will present the major elements of contemporary Spanish society regarding religious pluralism. The history of religious pluralism, the juridical framework, the sociological data and the general state of mind will be the dimensions presented. In light of these conditions I will then present a synthesis of my proposal for a public theology in Spain, gathering the insights of previous chapters and trying to answer the particular challenges that the Spanish situation presents us. I will finally illuminate this synthesis with two case studies of possible dialogue of traditions which I identify in contemporary Spanish society: the debate over fiscal policies adequate to address the economic crisis, and the discussion regarding educational centers of religious inspiration. In both cases, I will outline a possible implementation of the public theology I am proposing.

## IV. Overview of the Field

Before starting our reflection, it is important to give the reader an idea of the intellectual space that this proposal occupies. This will help better define our project and will help to develop it in the future. Because this dissertation is in the field of Christian social ethics, the content of our reflection is at the crossroads of theology and political philosophy. My point of view in this dissertation is strictly theological and I have chosen, for the sake of clarity, not to introduce a developed reflection on political philosophy. However, it will be evident to any well-informed reader that the assertions I make in the theological field

suppose options within the range of positions in contemporary political philosophy. Therefore I will try now to make explicit these options, as well as the theological options I am making. This way, the reader will be able to take a position more easily regarding my proposal.

Within the political philosophy spectrum, my proposal, which draws from David Tracy's and Paul Valadier's thought, can be placed within the heritage of the republican tradition, especially John Courtney Murray's thought.[11] This tradition considers citizenship to be based on the growth of a human community into a political community. This progression supposes civic dialogue based on arguments, agreements and disagreements about life in common.[12] Of course, it is possible to find overlaps and points of connection with other models of citizenship,[13] but these other models do not reflect entirely the understanding of society we are presenting here.

[11] When situating our proposal inside the political philosophy spectrum I am using Julio Martínez presentation of the field distinguishing four models of citizenship in contemporary political philosophy: the liberal, the communitarian, the republican and the communicative. He also adds a fifth model, the one of the social teaching of the Church. Cf. Julio L. Martínez, *Ciudadanía, migraciones y religión: Un diálogo ético desde la fe cristiana* (Madrid: San Pablo-Universidad Pontificia de Comillas, 2007), 188–307.

[12] Cf. Ibid., 239.

[13] Our proposal is close to the position of the late John Rawls, when he became much more open to the participation of religious arguments in the public debate. Cf. John Rawls, "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited," in *Political Liberalism*, Expanded ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005[orig. pub. 1993]), 440–490; it also reflects well some major communitarian claims such as the possibility of intervening in public debates, arguing from our comprehensive doctrines, cf. Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 197ff.

However, our proposals also display many resemblances with Habermas' communicative model of citizenship.[14] In this model popular sovereignty is based on the interactions between the institutionalized democratic ways to express the common will and the public cultural spaces of civil society; what Habermas calls the lifeworld. Political deliberations are then dependent on these other cultural deliberations of the lifeworld which are continuously being recreated.[15] The present growing pluralism of society which requires a continuous conversation between traditions in society has produced a shift in the way public theologians understand society, a shift which approximates them to this view.[16] This resemblance does not mean necessarily that we assume the whole of Habermas' philosophy. The approach of David Tracy to Habermas' thought,[17] the larger role of religion in society of the late Habermas[18] and a certain consensus among the authors studied on the importance of Habermas[19] reinforce this view.

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[14] A link to the republican and communicational model is not strange since, for Martínez, Habermas' position is very close to Courtney Murrays' and the republican model. "A mi juicio, se puede decir que Habermas suscribe un concepto republicano de ciudadanía en sentido débil..., en tanto en cuanto desvincula el componente republicano de la pertenencia en base a la descendencia, la tradición y la lengua común (un sentido étnico cultural de nación) y lo pone en la praxis de los mismos ciudadanos que ejercen sus derechos democráticos de participación y comunicación." Martínez, *Ciudadanía, migraciones y religión*, 267.

[15] Cf. Ibid., 274–275.

[16] Cf. for example David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1991 [orig. pub. 1981]), 36 note 26.

[17] Tracy explicitly states the connections between public theology and Habermas' critical theory in David Tracy, "Theology, Critical Theory, and the Public Realm," in *Habermas, Modernity and Public Theology*, ed. Don S. Browning and Francis Schüssler Fiorenza (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 19–42.

[18] "For the liberal state has an interest in the free expression of religious voices in the public arena and in the political participation of religious organizations. It must not discourage religious persons and communities from also expressing themselves as such in the political arena, for it cannot be sure that secular society would not otherwise cut itself off from key resources for the creation of meaning and identity." Jürgen Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 2008), 131; Cf. also Jürgen Habermas and

In the theological spectrum we can consider our position as a continuation of the line opened by Rahner in a way parallel to liberation and political theology. In fact, both Tracy and Valadier, the two major sources of this proposal, can be seen as heirs of the Rahnerian view. The Spanish theologian Gaspar Martínez sees the theology of Johan Baptist Metz, Gustavo Gutiérrez and David Tracy as three developments of the Rahnerian paradigm. The three follow the scheme of *exitus-reditus* between God and society. In Martínez words: "they exit transcendentality and move to history and society in order to place the discussion on God… at the level of the conditions of history and the experiences of non-identity found in that history." In a movement of *reditus* they then "retrieve the hiddenness and the incomprehensibility of God… in which Rahner himself recapitulated his theological enterprise."[20] The difference for Martínez is that each of the three authors proposes a way of his own in order to retrieve that hiddenness of God.[21] As I claim in the first chapter of the dissertation, a major difference is that, while political and liberation theologies emphasize particularly strongly the praxis of the church, public theology places greater emphasis upon its participation in pluralistic social dialogue. This emphasis on dialogue is also found in Valadier's social ethics.

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Joseph Ratzinger, *The Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006).

[19] Cf. Paul Valadier, *Inévitable morale* (Paris: Seuil, 1990), 58; cf. also Rafael Díaz-Salazar, *España laica: Ciudadanía plural y convivencia nacional* (Madrid: Espasa, 2008), 12; Cf. Juan Antonio Estrada, *El cristianismo en una sociedad laica*, 2nd ed. (Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 2006), 168.

[20] Gaspar Martinez, *Confronting the Mystery of God: Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 216.

[21] Martínez identifies several points of contrast: the role of praxis, the role of social sciences and critical theory, the use of biblical texts, the understanding of the ambiguity of history, their understanding of salvation in Jesus Christ and the role of the Church. Cf. Ibid., 218ff.

In the first pages of their public theology volume *Fullness of Faith,* Michael and Kenneth Himes make the following statement: "an interpretation of the Christian creed that ignores the social dimension of human experience falls short of the fullness of faith."[22] After this brief overview of the crossroads of fields in which we are developing our reflection, and before getting into the subject matter of this dissertation, let us keep this quote in mind. Our goal ultimately is that the Christian faith of so many Spaniards will become a source of light, hope and compassion for 21st-century Spanish society.

[22] Michael J. Himes and Kenneth R. Himes, *Fullness of Faith: The Public Significance of Theology* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1993), 5.

# CHAPTER 1. PUBLIC THEOLOGY AT HOME: THE AMERICAN CONTEXT

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the 70's a movement has appeared in the U.S. theological milieu which wants to bring theology and theological argumentation into the public debate. Ultimately the concern is to show how the particular religious traditions, specifically the Christian traditions, contribute to the common good of society. Gaspar Martínez sees this concern as a logical one in a country like the U.S. where the wide majority of the population declares themselves believers in God but where the plurality of denominations and religious groups is extreme. Such a wild plurality invites one to ignore the particularity of each denomination in order to take into account only a general religious feeling, some kind of common denominator.[23] The desire to bring theology into public life is a reaction to this tendency. For some authors this was the view held by many of the founding Fathers of the U.S. which induced them to seek for some kind of deist religiosity for the new Nation.[24]

[23] "In a society like the United States, where over 90 percent of the population affirm belief in God, to justify theistic claim on public grounds, although important in relation to the cognitive status of religious claims and to the challenge of secularistic cultural currents, is not the most difficult task. Theism is sociologically public, despite the ambiguities concerning its public-institutional relevance. But, bearing in mind the sweeping religious plurality in U.S. society, the real challenge is to justify the public status of a particular tradition and to show that this tradition can contribute to the public realm." Martinez, *Confronting the Mystery of God: Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies*, 198.

[24] "Washington, Madison, Adams, Franklin, and Jefferson held views on religion heavily influenced by the Enlightenment. For example, they clearly leaned toward deism, referring to God as Architect, Supreme Being, Providence and similar names...much like Rousseau, they all were convinced that a sort of civil religion was needed to sustain society and guarantee peace and progress in it." Ibid., 168. However, we will see how Martin Marty has a different understanding of Franklin's attitude toward particular denominations.

At the same time, the historical and juridical context of the U.S. is especially favorable to this theological enterprise. The U.S. Constitution is probably the one which has best articulated the separation between church and state. The Bill of Rights of 1791 contained the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which prohibits the establishment of a state religion.[25] Although there have always been various interpretations of this amendment, in general it is widely accepted that this non-establishment of religion doesn't deny the public role of particular religions but it seeks to protect the free exercise of religion in private and public from the intervention of the state.[26]

This is the context in which the idea of a theology which speaks to the public sphere appeared; this is the home of what we call a public theology. We try, thus, to understand the sense of this enterprise as well as its different movements. We focus particularly on the main Catholic variant of it because of its closeness to the Spanish reality which is the ultimate goal of our work.

In this chapter we present first a general overview of the movement around the term public theology in the U.S. We then approach the main Catholic variant of it, which is inspired mainly by David Tracy's paradigm of critical correlation. Finally, we will try to

[25] "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." Founding Fathers, *The Constitution of the United States of America* (Bedford, MA: Applewood Books, 1995), 18.

[26] This model of separation of church and state is clearly different from the French model of laicité, where the public sphere is supposed to be free of any religious presence in order to avoid social conflict. For a good description and critique of the French laicité, cf. Paul Valadier, *Détresse du politique, force du religieux* (Paris: Seuil, 2007), chapter 3.

establish a working definition of public theology and suggest what I think we can draw from it for the purpose of our inquiry.

## II. THE MOVEMENT OF PUBLIC THEOLOGY

### 1. THE REASONS TO BRING THEOLOGY INTO PUBLIC LIFE

The concern of U.S theologians to bring their reflection into public life has followed the trend already set initially by political theology[27] and by liberation theology some years later.[28] This trend seeks a stronger engagement of theology with social and political life. From my point of view, there are two main reasons for the particular U.S. concern for bringing theology into the public sphere: The first reason is the appearance of a wider pluralism in the U.S. society; the second is secularization theory's pledge for a privatization of religion.

#### *a) THE INCREASING PLURALISM*

On the one hand, the recognition of an increasing social, cultural and religious pluralism is a common trait of the American intellectual world since the 60's. In the whole spectrum of thought, from political philosophy to theology, all scholars recognize the presence of a deeper pluralism in society which obliges us to think about social life differently.[29] This increased pluralism began with the election of John F. Kennedy as

[27] Johann Baptist Metz published his first work on political theology in 1968, cf. Johann Baptist Metz, *Zur Theologie Der Welt* (Ostfildern: Grünewald, 1968).

[28] Gutiérrez's first book on liberation theology is from 1971, cf. Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Teología de la liberación: Perspectivas* (Lima: Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones, 1971).

[29] "If pluralism in the sense explained is the characteristic fact of contemporary society, it is also the original root of certain problems that are no less characteristic." John Courtney Murray, *We Hold These Truths:*

president of the United States, an event which marked the arrival of Catholicism in the traditionally Protestant American public sphere.[30] Judaism also requested a space. During the 70's the pluralism became more ideological and ethnic with the appearance of feminism and African American claims.[31] During the 80's pluralism meant particularly a plurality of moralities in society. Today immigration currents have brought believers of many different religious – Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, new age religious – into the classically Christian American context, making it even more plural.[32]

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*Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition*, ed. Walter J. Burghardt, with a critical introduction by Peter A. Lawler. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005 [orig. pub. Sheed & Ward, 1960]), 126; "[i]n a culture of pluralism must each religious tradition finally either dissolve into some lowest common denominator or accept a marginal existence as one interesting but purely private opinion?" Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, xi; "[a] modern democratic society is characterized not simply by a pluralism of comprehensive religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines but by a pluralism of incompatible yet reasonable comprehensive doctrines." John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, Expanded. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005 [orig. pub. 1993]), xvi.

[30] Robert Bellah developed his idea of a civil religion as an answer to the difficulty of speaking about God perceived in JFK's inaugural address because of the plurality already present: "In fact, his only reference was to the concept of God, a word which almost all Americans can accept but which means so many different things to so many different people that it is almost an empty sign." Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," in *American Civil Religion*, ed. Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 23.

[31] Martin Marty expresses very clearly what this pluralism means, in his debate with Robert Bellah about civil religion he asserts that today there is no one civil religion but many. Not only does each Christian denomination have its own view on civil religion, but new understandings have appeared during the 60's and 70's in function of the different ethnic groups: Jews, Black militants, Black Muslims and other non-WASP groups. Cf. Martin E. Marty, "Two Kinds of Two Kinds of Civil Religion," in *American Civil Religion*, ed. Russell, E. Richey and Jones, Donald G. (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 143.

[32] The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life gives us the following percentages in terms of religious affiliation among adults (over18) in the U.S. today: Catholics 23.9%; Evangelical churches 26.3%; Mainline Protestant churches 18.1%; Historical black churches 6.9%; Mormons 1.7%; Jehovah's Witnesses 0.7%; Orthodox 0.6%; Jewish 1.7%; Buddhist 0.7%; Muslim 0.6%; Hindu 0.4%; Atheist 1.6%; Agnostic 2.4%. "Statistics on Religion in America Report -- Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life", June 23, 2011, http://religions.pewforum.org/reports.

*b) THE PRIVATIZATION OF RELIGION*

On the other hand, the concern that unites all public theologians, in spite of their heterogeneity, is the tendency of modern societies to relegate religion to the private sphere rejecting its presence in public life.[33] Richard J. Neuhaus has called this phenomenon "the naked public square."[34] José Casanova has developed probably the sharpest analysis of this process in his book *Public Religions in the Modern World.*[35] He asserts there that the radicalization of secularization theory during the 60's promoted the idea of a necessary privatization of religions.[36] Thomas Luckmann – a main author in this trend of privatization—exposed the idea of the privatization of religions in his book *The Invisible Religion* in the following words:

> The social form of religion emerging in modern industrial societies is characterized by the direct accessibility of an assortment of religious representations to potential consumers. The sacred cosmos is mediated neither through a specialized domain of religious institutions nor through other primary public institutions. It is the direct accessibility of the sacred cosmos, more precisely, of an assortment of religious

[33] "Nevertheless, we can identify a 'common enemy' that unites them [developments in public theology]. Each of these movements is seeking to overcome the privatization of religion. Each is seeking a larger and more effective role for religion and theological discourse in shaping events in the public arena." Linell Elizabeth Cady, *Religion, Theology, and American Public Life* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 1.

[34] Cf. Richard John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1986).

[35] José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

[36] "In such a world, whatever residual religion, if any, still remains becomes so subjective and privatized that it turns 'invisible,' that is, marginal and irrelevant from a societal point of view." Ibid., 35.

themes, which makes religion today essentially a phenomenon of the "private sphere.[37]

For Casanova, this view means a radicalization of secularization theory in the sense that it supposes that the secularization of the society is not just a contingent circumstance but an inevitable and irreversible historical movement which will accomplish the necessary extinction of religions' social role.[38] This privatization of religion has been reinforced by other authors in different fields; as a main example we can consider Rawls' view of the role of religion in public and the rejection of the religious argument from public reason.[39] Casanova's thesis consists in the idea that, in opposition to the theories of secularization, we can identify today a process of deprivatization of religion through which religion surprisingly gets a more and more significant presence in the public sphere.[40] I believe that

[37] Luckmann's book is important because it was published in 1967, before the first works of political and liberation theology and well before Martin Marty used the term public theology for the first time. Thomas Luckmann, *The Invisible Religion: The Problem of Religion in Modern Society* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 103.

[38] Cf. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, 25–26. Casanova's main thesis is that we are now in a process of "deprivatization" of religions. In my opinion public theology is an expression of this movement. Earlier (p. 5) Casanova states: "The central thesis of the present study is that we are witnessing the 'deprivatization' of religion in the modern world. By deprivatization I mean the fact that religious traditions throughout the world are refusing to accept the marginal and privatized role which theories of modernity as well as theories of secularization had reserved for them."

[39] "There are many nonpublic reasons and but one public reason. Among the nonpublic reasons are those of associations of all kinds: churches and universities, scientific societies and professional groups... This way of reasoning is public with respect to their members, but nonpublic with respect to political society and to citizens generally." Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 220; however there is much discussion about the role of religious discourse in Rawls' thought, and he himself evolved a more open attitude toward religion, cf. Rawls, "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited."

[40] "What I call the 'deprivatization' of modern religion is the process whereby religion abandons its assigned place in the private sphere and enters the undifferentiated public sphere of civil society to take part in the

the concept of public theology would be a very interesting way to channel this movement of "deprivatization." It fulfills the demands that Casanova proposes for religions which, impelled by the process of deprivatization, enter into the public sphere. Casanova demands of them to respect the normative principle of freedom of conscience and so become a positive contribution to the common good of the society.[41]

This theory of the necessary privatization of religion is in my opinion a great motivation for theologians to come into the public sphere. I believe so because the rejection of a privatization of religion is a constant claim at the beginning of many writings on public theology.[42] I also think that there is a clear connection between these two tendencies: pluralism and privatization of religion. When religion becomes a purely personal and subjective affair, the religious options in society are multiplied as each individual does his personal religious quest in isolation from the others. Casanova seems to suggest this in his interpretation of the privatization phenomenon.[43] However, we cannot reduce pluralism to a

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ongoing process of contestation, discursive legitimation, and redrawing of the boundaries." Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, 65–66.

[41] Cf. Ibid., 57–58; cf. also Ibid., 220ff.

[42] "The need is to form a new and inevitably complex theological strategy that will avoid privatism by articulating the genuine claims of religion to truth." Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, xi; "This volume seeks to show that a theology shaped by the biblical narratives and grounded in the practices of the Christian community can provide resources to enable people of faith to regain a public voice in our pluralistic culture." Ibid., 19; "Nevertheless, we can identify a 'common enemy' that unites them. Each of these movements is seeking to overcome the privatization of religion. Each is seeking a larger and more effective role for religion and theological discourse in shaping events in the public arena." Cady, *Religion, Theology, and American Public Life*, 1; "What unites those who belong to the public church is the desire to move religious belief away from a narrow concern with personal life which effectively has undercut the church's mission to the wider realm of social existence." Himes and Himes, *Fullness of Faith*, 1.

[43] Cf. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, 35.

simple effect of privatization. The present global phenomenon of migrations, which is especially strong in Europe, is creating more widely interreligious societies composed of citizens with very different religious origins.

## 2. THE IMMEDIATE ORIGINS: THE DEBATE BETWEEN ROBERT BELLAH AND MARTIN MARTY.

The term public theology itself appeared for the first time in the writings of the Lutheran historian Martin Marty, and it is a critical response to the promotion of the idea of a civil religion. The term was developed through an intellectual dialogue between Marty and Robert Bellah.

### *a) BELLAH'S CIVIL RELIGION*

Inspired by John F. Kennedy's inaugural address which tried to blur Kennedy's Catholic origin while at the same time acknowledging a transcendent dimension in U.S. society and politics, Robert Bellah published a major essay in 1967 called "Civil Religion in America." In this work he retrieved Rousseau's advocacy of a civil religion, developed and imposed by the state, as a way to cover the religious dimension of an ideal society.[44] Civil religion for Bellah would be then "a collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals with respect to sacred things and institutionalized in a collectivity."[45]

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[44] "It follows from the above, however, that the sovereign is entitled to fix the tenets of a purely civil creed, or profession of faith. These would not be, strictly speaking, dogmas of a religious character, but rather sentiments seemed indispensable for participation in society - i.e., sentiments without which no man can be either a good citizen or a loyal subject." Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1954), 220.

[45] Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," 29.

*b) MARTY'S PUBLIC RELIGION*

Martin Marty took a critical position toward Bellah's civil religion and set some limits to this concept in a 1974 essay called "Two kinds of two kinds of civil religion."[46] Marty shows in this work how civil religion is episodic, how it is rejected by certain groups, and how it is more the social construction of scholars than a real thing.[47] He then identifies two different kinds of civil religion: one that sees the nation "under God" where "somehow a transcendent deity is seen as the pusher or puller of the social process"[48]; and another which stresses "national self-transcendence" that is to say "either references to deity disappear entirely or 'God' is drained of earlier cognitive imports and may appear terminologically only out of habitual reference."[49]

Within these two kinds of civil religion there are still two other sub-types: the priestly one which "will normally be celebrative, affirmative, culture-building,"[50] and the prophetic one which "will tend to be dialectical about civil religion, but with a predisposition toward the judgmental."[51] As we see, Marty shows the heterogeneity of what

[46] Marty, "Two Kinds of Two Kinds of Civil Religion." This essay was published together with Bellah's original essay on civil religion and with a later Bellah reflection on the issue.

[47]Cf. Ibid., 139–144.

[48] Ibid., 144.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid., 145.

[51] Ibid.

had been called civil religion and how, in some cases, it drifts very much apart from what Bellah was originally conceiving.

Particularly Marty's category of a "prophetic-nation under God" civil religion corresponds fairly well to the public contribution of particular religious denominations. He calls "public religions" those particular denominations which intervene in public. Inside these public religions those individual figures who take a main role in their public discourse are called "public theologians" by Marty.[52] In his words:

> Perhaps these three figures [Edwards, Lincoln and Reinhold Niebuhr] should be thought of as critical public theologians as opposed to votaries of civil religion. It may be unrealistic to picture most adherents using their religion over against their own identity, integration, or power … In all three cases, however, these public theologians are prophets from within the tradition. The outsider never has the same kind of credentials.[53]

Marty stresses the fact that this position of public theologians is not a critique from the outside of society, but from within.[54] Therefore Marty is considering that some social thinkers and social actors, while working within social institutions and engaged with them,

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[52] Marty identifies Johathan Edwards, Abraham Lincoln and Reinhold Niebuhr as public theologians. Ibid., 147–148; In a previous article he had already described Reinhold Niebuhr as a public theologian: "[Niebuhr] took the behavior of his people and, reflecting on it in the light of biblical, historical, and philosophical positions, offered the ensuing generation a paradigm for a public theology, a model which his successors have only begun to develop and realize." Martin E. Marty, "Reinhold Niebuhr: Public Theology and the American Experience," *The Journal of Religion* 54 (1974): 359.

[53] Marty, "Two Kinds of Two Kinds of Civil Religion," 148.

[54] "The prophetic mode has to be dialectical. If it comes unilaterally from outside or is totally rejective from within, it does not belong to the civil religion, which is an expression of a somehow-covenanted group of insiders." Ibid., 149.

will recall some transcendent principles from their particular religious traditions in order to judge the social institutions but with the goal of helping them to advance.

Robert Bellah answered Marty's critique in an essay published in the same volume.[55] There he received and accepted Marty's concept of a public theology.[56] Public theology would not be inconsistent with civil religion as long as it doesn't impose its view and its symbol on the entire society; religious pluralism is a warrant for this.[57]

Marty would develop his position in a more extended subsequent work called *The Public Church.*[58] In this book, Marty asserts that, in contrast with other founding fathers like Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin had a positive understanding of the role of particular religions in society.[59] He draws this insight from Franklin's use of the term public religion.[60] This term would reflect a view of religions as positive contributors to public

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[55] Robert Bellah, "American Civil Religion in the 1970s," in *American Civil Religion*, ed. Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 255–272.

[56] "Marty proposes to distinguish between civil religion and public theology, a distinction which I view as a major contribution to the discussion of civil religion." Ibid., 258.

[57] "A variety of interpretations, even a cumulative tradition of interpretation, is not inconsistent with the openness of civil religious transcendence as long as no public theological position is institutionalize as a civil religious orthodoxy. Indeed, a variety of public theologies is a guarantee of the openness of civil religion. In the balance between civil religion and public theology a fruitful tension between generality and particularity may be maintained." Ibid., 259.

[58] Martin E. Marty, *The Public Church: Mainline-Evangelical-Catholic* (New York: Crossroad, 1981).

[59] As we have already seen, not every author agrees with this interpretation of Franklin's view of particular religions. Cf. Martinez, *Confronting the Mystery of God: Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies*, 168.

[60] "History will also afford frequent Opportunities of showing the Necessity of a Publick Religion, from its Usefulness to the Publick, the Advantage of a Religious Character among private Persons; the Mischief of Superstition, etc. and the Excellency of the Christian Religion above all other antient or modern." Benjamin Franklin, "Proposal Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania," in *Writings*, ed. Joseph A. Leo

virtue and commonwealth.[61] Marty proposes the idea of public church as a realization of this public religion. Public church actually supposes a model for a common self-understanding and mission of the various Christian churches in the U.S.[62] This model is a response to today's consumerist and privatizing approach to religion, fruit of contemporary pluralism.[63] Public church's contribution to public virtue and commonweal is articulated through a public discourse which he calls public theology, that is to say, "an effort to interpret the life of a people in the light of a transcendent reference."[64]

Therefore the origin of the term public theology is a reaffirmation of the role of particular religions in society in opposition to a reduction of them to some kind of common civil religion. This role is understood as a critical one, which springs from a reading of the social reality undertaken through the lens of a particular tradition. But this critical role is done from the inside of society and its institutions, with a discourse – public theology – that is understandable by it and with the goal of improving the society.

### 3. THE RANGE OF AUTHORS

After the introduction of the term public theology by Martin Marty, various authors have tried to develop a model of how to do such a theology. The literature on the field is

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Lemay (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1987), 336–337. This concept of public religion would be an American alternative to Rousseau's civil religion which is very pessimistic toward the contributions of religions to social life.

[61] Cf. Marty, *The Public Church: Mainline-Evangelical-Catholic*, 129.

[62] Cf. Ibid., 16.

[63] Cf. Ibid., ix.

[64] Cf. Ibid., 16.

huge and not easily embraceable. Harold Breitenberg wrote a major article on the topic where he presents a thorough overview of the different positions and the bibliography related to the term public theology: "To tell the truth: Will the real public theology please stand up?" There, he underlines, in the midst of many others, four particularly significant authors on the topic: David Tracy, Ronald Thiemann, Linell Cady and Robert Benne.[65] In order to present a synthetic view of the field, I will follow Breitembert's suggestion and I will now present briefly the thought of three of the authors mentioned in Breitenberg's article. I will present David Tracy's thought in a later section in order to show its special influence in the Catholic variant of public theology.

*a) LINELL CADY*

The first author mentioned by Breitenberg is Linell Cady.[66] In her book *Religion, Theology, and American Public Life,* Linell Cady proposes to develop a public theology as an answer to the marginalization of theology, especially in the university.[67] She defines

[65] "A second type of works within the literature devoted to public theology is concerned with discussions about what public theology is and how it should be carried out. This collection of literature includes some of the best known, most influential, and most often cited works in the field, such as David Tracy's *The Analogical Imagination*, Ronald Thiemann's *Constructing a Public Theology*, Linnel Cady's *Religion, Theology, and American Public Life*, and Robert Benne's *The Paradoxical Vision*, as well as numerous other works that focus on questions of definition and method related to public theology." E. Harold Breitenberg, "To tell the truth: Will the real public theology please stand up?" *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 23, no. 2 (2003): 64.

[66] Cady is Associate Professor and Chair in the Department of Religious Studies at Arizona State University. Raised a Catholic, Cady has developed her thought mainly in dialogue with secular thinking as a result of her academic context.

[67] Cf. Cady, *Religion, Theology, and American Public Life*, ix.

public theology as "the discipline that contributes to the interpretation, evaluation and extension of these symbolic universes as they manifest themselves in a religious mode."[68]

Cady wants to develop a public theology which is creative and critical toward society and toward its own religious tradition. In this sense she drifts apart from Tracy's hermeneutical model which she considers not creative enough.[69] She prefers to draw from Gadamer's inspiration in juridical models of interpretation, where the whole of the tradition is interpreted each time we reflect.[70] On the one hand, this model gives the theologian a critical stance toward her own tradition. On the other hand, public theology becomes creative and critical toward society because religion has the power to confront the mythical dimension of the liberal paradigm. [71] Theology can do this not through a narrative discourse, that she considers sectarian, but through a form of argumentation that is intelligible by everyone and public.[72] Cady takes as her theological starting point monotheism (God as creator, God as sustainer, God as redeemer).[73] Although the Incarnation could fit in her view, she does not develop a Christological approach.[74] The critical stance of religion toward society allows her to propose a reform of the division

[68] Ibid., 57.

[69] Cf. Ibid., 36.

[70] Cf. Ibid., 51.

[71] Cf. Ibid., 163.

[72] "A public theology not only must address itself to the wider social and political issues, but it must appropriate a form of argumentation that is genuinely public." Ibid., 26.

[73] Cf. Ibid., 100ff.

[74] Cf. Ibid., 116.

private-public life.[75] Cady proposes a new view of public life based on the interconnectedness of all life forms through the concept of a common life. [76] This view is an alternative to the liberal and communitarian paradigm, and balances the global and local approaches.[77]

*b) RONALD THIEMANN*

The second author mentioned by Breitenberg is Ronald Thiemann.[78] In his book *Constructing a Public Theology: The Church in a Pluralistic Culture,* Thiemann understands public theology as "faith seeking to understand the relation between Christian convictions and the broader social and cultural context within which the Christian community lives."[79] He believes that theology provides us with the resources to regain a voice in public life but he wants to preserve the Christian identity of this contribution.[80] He sees then that public theology should be based not only on intellectual discourses but also on the narratives of Scripture and the practices of the Christian community. Therefore, the

[75] "Exploring this opposition will shed light on the distinctive substantive agenda of a public theology: to contribute on both a practical and theoretical plane to the reconfiguration of public life." Ibid., 65.

[76] Cf. Ibid., 154ff; Cf. Ibid., 89.

[77] Cf. Cady, *Religion, Theology, and American Public Life*, 154ff.

[78] Ronald Thiemann is an ordained Lutheran minister and Benjamin Bussey Professor of Theology at Harvard Divinity School and Dean of this school from 1986 until 1998.

[79] Ronald F. Thiemann, *Constructing a Public Theology: The Church in a Pluralistic Culture* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 21.

[80] Cf. Ibid., 19.

main role of the Christian churches in society is to become schools of public virtue and communities of hope.[81]

Thiemann rejects what he calls a foundational understanding of theology, which would try to extract the universal essence of the religious experience.[82] Based on Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic mode and on Karl Barth,[83] he proposes a non-foundational view of religion as a semiotic system or language where practice has priority over theory.[84] The Word of God, in the form of the narratives of Scripture, has the priority, although human reason should play its part in interpreting these narratives.[85] He opposes Tracy's view of a permanent correlation between faith and the world and he sees this relationship as dialectical.[86] This means that, although we still need social analysis to develop a public theology, we can expect to establish *ad hoc* alliances between theology and culture only in

[81] Cf. Ibid., 43; cf. Ibid., 25.

[82] Cf. Thiemann, *Constructing a Public Theology*, 128. As main authors in this line Thiemann identifies Schleiermacher and David Tracy.

[83] Cf. Ibid., 86.

[84] Cf. Ibid., 152.

[85] "Scripture, I will argue, presents a complicated but finally coherent narrative that invites the reader to consider the world there depicted as the one true reality. Scripture's claim to truth comes not in the form of a tyrannical dogmatic assertion but in the form of an invitation, or better, a promise." Ibid., 51.

[86] Cf. Ibid., 87.

particular issues.[87] These alliances will be worked out mainly in the particular vocation of each Christian.[88]

### c) *ROBERT BENNE*

The third author mentioned by Breitenberg is Robert Benne.[89] His main book on this topic is *The Paradoxical Vision: A Public Theology for the Twenty-first Century*. In this work, the author understands public theology as the engagement of religions and churches in the world, at the cultural, political and economic levels.[90] Benne wants to propose the Lutheran approach to public religion – what he calls the paradoxical vision[91]—as an alternative to the shortcomings he identifies in the Calvinist and Catholic approach.[92] Benne identifies different levels in the church's message; the further they are from the core vision the more disputable they are.[93] The paradoxical vision allows us to develop a

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[87] Cf. Ibid., 91.

[88] Cf. Ibid., 25.

[89] Robert Benne is a Lutheran and professor of religion at Roanoke College, Salem, Virginia.

[90] "Public theology, I think, refers to the engagement of a living religious tradition with its public environment – the economic, political, and cultural spheres of our common life. The definition, like those above, affirms an integrity, a *sui generis* quality, for a religious tradition. It assumes that a particular religious worldview is an authentic quest for ultimate truth and that people of that tradition actually shape their lives according to their religious vision." Robert Benne, *The Paradoxical Vision: A Public Theology for the Twenty-first Century* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 4–5.

[91] The name "paradoxical vision" is drawn from one of the models of H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (San Francisco: Harper, 2001 [orig. pub. 1951]). In Niebuhr's book Luther is one of the main authors of this model.

[92] In spite of his defense of the Lutheran approach, Benne is critical with the way that the official Lutheran churches have reflected this vision and he find it better reflected in the work of some individuals who are not Lutheran (Reinhold Niebuhr and Richard Neuhaus). Cf. Benne, *The Paradoxical Vision*, 104ff.

framework in which to later develop a social ethics without compromising the core vision of the faith.[94]

The main points of the paradoxical vision's framework are: the qualitative distinction between the gospel and all human actions; the paradox of human nature; the twofold rule of God; the paradox of history.[95] All four of these points are a synthesis of the Lutheran understanding of Christianity, and especially of Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms.[96] Rightly understood, this view does not suppose a dualism between society and the church. It rather supposes the recognition of a duality of principles in human social life which is the fruit of the tension in the between time before the second arrival of Christ.[97] Our work for the amelioration of this world is always relativized and put into question by God's grace. The paradoxical vision privileges, thus, an indirect influence of the church in society through the exercise of the individual Christian's vocations in the secular world – Christians who are inspired by their religious life – more than a direct public action of the church in society.[98] This direct action in society could be a sign of pride and a compromise of the core of the faith. However Benne also considers other more direct influences of the

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[93] Cf. Ibid., 72–76.

[94] Cf. Ibid., 225.

[95] Cf. Ibid., 68ff.

[96] A good and synthetic exposition of Luther's theory of the two kingdoms can be found in Martin Luther, "Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed," in *The Christian in Society II*, ed. Walter I. Brandt and Helmut T. Lehmann, Luther's Works 45 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1962), 75–130.

[97] Cf. Benne, *The Paradoxical Vision*, 80.

[98] Cf. Ibid., 199.

church, especially advocacy, although he establishes some conditions to do so in order not to compromise the integrity of the Church's mission.[99] Any direct influence should be done in a language that is intelligible to the interior and exterior of the church; and such an influence should be accompanied by credibility in the church's behavior.[100]

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As is readily evident, the three authors considered (Cady, Thiemann and Benne) have a common concern for addressing social realities from the standpoint of Christian theology. However, their models for doing so are very different. Cady proposes a theological reflection that looks critically on society and its own religious tradition; Thiemann wants to start from narratives, ritual and Christian practices; and Benne tries to synthesize the main points of Lutheran theology and offer a framework for social action from them. This heterogeneity comes partly from the audience which the authors are addressing, and from their backgrounds. In particular, the Christian denomination to which the author belongs is especially relevant, because each Christian tradition has a particular way of considering the relationship between faith and culture.[101] This plurality of approaches to the idea of a public theology – Harold Breitenberg speaks of a variety of

[99] Cf. Ibid., 206ff.

[100] Cf. Ibid.

[101] We can notice some similarities in Thiemann and Benne's approach which I associate with their common Lutheran background. However, Thiemann's model is very particular and drifts apart from Benne's synthesis of the Lutheran approach.

understandings, and even a confusion –[102] invites me to present a main assertion about public theology. What we call public theology is not a unified school or current of theology, given that there are so many possible models for it.[103] In my opinion, public theology would rather be an accent in theology, a particular style.[104] This particular accent or style in theology – publicness—emerges as a very necessary one in western societies due to their increasing cultural and religious pluralism and the process of privatization of religion.[105]

In spite of this heterogeneity, in an overview of these authors we can nevertheless notice how David Tracy is a common reference for all of them. Although in one way or the other Cady, Thiemann and Benne try to maintain some distance from Tracy's model,

[102] "Many writers have noted the variety of definitions that exists for public theology. while the precise meaning of the term within the field of theological ethics is itself a topic of debate, the situation is further complicated by references to public theology in other disciplines and contexts as well as by the range of explicit and implicit understandings of public theology held by those who write about it." Breitenberg, "To tell the truth: Will the real public theology please stand up?" 56.

[103] See note 43 above.

[104] Gaspar Martínez speaks of public theology as an "effort" cf. Martinez, *Confronting the Mystery of God: Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies*, 21; in the same line, Linell Cady rejects any reification of the term public theology and prefers to speak of a heuristic device. "But I have become more sensitive to the dangers of reification that attend reference to something called 'public theology.' Public theology is a heuristic device that ceases to be useful once questions of inclusion and exclusion drive the discussion" Cady, *Religion, Theology, and American Public Life*, x.

[105] "Public theology has functioned for me as a useful prism through which to refract multiple characteristics especially needed in a contemporary theology." Cady, *Religion, Theology, and American Public Life*, x; Tracy sees publicness also as part of theology's nature: "Theology by the very nature of the reality of God upon which theology reflects, must develop public, not private, criteria and discourse." Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, xi.

ultimately, the three of them have to make some reference to him. This suggests to me the wide influence of Tracy in the movement of public theology.

## III. THE CATHOLIC VARIANT

Linell Cady, in her book *Religion, Theology, and American Public Life,* affirms that although initially inspired by the Protestant tradition, today public theology "has begun to assume a Roman Catholic shape as well."[106] She mentions here John Courtney Murray, Rosemary Ruether and John Coleman as three examples of this Catholic approach to public theology. She also includes the U.S. bishops' letters *The Challenge of Peace* and *Economic Justice for All* in this line. This identification of a Catholic variant of the concern for the publicness of theology invites me to present together the U.S. Catholic authors that I consider the main ones in public theology. My thesis is that they should be considered not as separated alternative approaches to the publicness of theology, but as approaches inserted inside a common paradigm; the one proposed in David Tracy's *Analogical Imagination*. U.S. Catholic theologians who are considered to do public theology have more in common than developing a theology addressed to the public. They follow a particular and specific method in theology along the lines of David Tracy's critical-correlation paradigm.

[106] "Although first and primarily a Protestant theological tradition, it has begun to assume a Roman Catholic shape as well, reflected, for instance, in the writings of John Courtney Murray, Rosemary Ruether, and John Coleman as well as the recent American Catholic Bishops' letters on nuclear warfare and economic justice. With the emergence of a Roman Catholic variant of this perspective, it is impossible to speak of a single line of historical influence." Cady, *Religion, Theology, and American Public Life*, 168; We can find very similar references to a new and influential Catholic public theology in Robert Benne's work; cf. Benne, *The Paradoxical Vision*, 45ff.

This Catholic variant has its own specificities, fruit of the particularities of the Catholic tradition. On the one hand, the sources that nourish this theology include some streams that are not present in other authors. In my opinion these sources would be: the inspiration of Vatican II, Catholic social teaching, and the work of John Courtney Murray. On the other hand, in all Catholic public theologians there is a strong concern for mediation, a sign of Catholic theology. These authors make a strong effort to mediate Christian symbols and concepts with the different societal issues without denying the autonomy and coherence of the secular understanding.[107] This is why Tracy's model has become such a framework for this effort.

## 1. ORIGINS

The Catholic variant of public theology appeared in a timely fashion. If Martin Marty used the term for the first time in 1974, John Coleman used it to categorize the work of some Catholic theologians only two years later. This use of the term by John Coleman sparked a dialogue between some major Catholic social ethicists through articles in *Theological Studies* between 1976 and 1979. This reflection was done in dialogue with John Courtney Murray's heritage, the mainline of American Catholic social reflection up to that day. We will now approach these first exchanges on the topic as a way to understand the origins and development of the Catholic variant of public theology.

[107] It is interesting to compare this Catholic emphasis on mediation with the Lutheran approach which sees a more conflictual and paradoxical relationship between the Christian symbols and society, as we have seen in Robert Benne's work. Cf. Benne, *The Paradoxical Vision*.

*a) THEOLOGICAL STUDIES 1976*

In an article in *Theological Studies* in 1976, John Coleman presented the thesis that Martin Marty's term "public theologian" could be applied to the three main past Catholic theologians of the U.S.: Orestes Brownson, John Ryan and John Courtney Murray. His reason for employing this label is that the three of them subjected their work to theology's criteria of adequacy but that they also correlated their conclusions with those of secular sciences like philosophy, economics and political science.[108]

David Hollenbach responded to Coleman's article in the same issue of Theological Studies, reflecting on Coleman's identification of these three American Catholic theologians as public theologians. Hollenbach wanted to give shape to Coleman's desire to "develop a public theology for the very different America and the very different Catholic Church of today."[109] In order to develop this new theology, Hollenbach proposed to develop particularly John Courtney Murray's thought, taking into account the fact of the growing pluralism, probably the main characteristic of contemporary American society.[110]

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[108] "Brownson, Ryan, and Murray were each steeped in the full tradition of Christian theology. Each, however, moved beyond theology to correlate his thought with a secular discipline: philosophy, economics, and political science respectively. All three were significantly involved in discerning the signs of the their own times… The three were, in Martin Marty's phrase, 'public theologians' who drew upon their Catholic tradition to address issues and audiences in the wider American or international context." John A. Coleman, "Vision and Praxis in American Theology: Orestes Brownson, John A. Ryan, and John Courtney Murray," *Theological Studies* 37 (1976): 7. In the terms used by Coleman (criteria of adequacy, correlation) we can identify the influence of David Tracy's work; Coleman offers an expanded analysis of these historical figures in chapter 4 of John A. Coleman, *An American Strategic Theology* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1982).

[109] David Hollenbach, "Public Theology in America: Some Questions for Catholicism After John Courtney Murray," *Theological Studies* 37 (1976): 290.

[110] "The purpose was to raise some questions about the 'growing end' of American Catholic public theology." Ibid., 303.

In light of this pluralism, Hollenbach set the goal for American theology as "to develop a theology whose roots in the biblical symbolic vision are evident, and which then seeks to interpret the contemporary meaning and significance of these symbols in a rigorous and critical way."[111] Hollenbach's position supposes then that the Christian symbols can be an instrument in a pluralistic society to build a healthier and more humane common life.

*b) SYMPOSIUM IN THEOLOGICAL STUDIES 1979.*

This initial dialogue was continued in a symposium organized in 1979 by Theological Studies under the title "Theology and Philosophy in Public: A Symposium on John Courtney Murray's Unifinished Agenda." The goal of this symposium was to "clarify the links between the Church's contribution to an American public philosophy and the public impact of the Church's own theological convictions."[112] The contributors to the symposium – John Coleman, Robin Lovin, J. Bryan Hehir and David Hollenbach – reflected on public theology as a legitimate continuation of John Courtney Murray's thought. The reasons for this reflection were, in David Hollenbach's words, "the heightened awareness of the political dimensions of the whole theological enterprise which political and liberation theology have stimulated… [and] the increased understanding of the social power of religious symbols and beliefs."[113]

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[111] Ibid., 302.

[112] David Hollenbach, "Theology and Philosophy in Public: a Symposium on John Courtney Murray," ed. David Hollenbach, *Theological Studies* 40, Theology and Philosophy in Public: A Symposium on John Courtney Murray's Unfinished Agenda (1979): 700.

[113] Ibid., 701.

The positions of the participants were diverse. John Coleman and Robin Lovin were more favorable to the idea of a public theology,[114] and Bryan Hehir was more reluctant.[115] In the final conclusion to the symposium, David Hollenbach presented the question at the root of the discussion, as a question for fundamental theology. If public theology is "the effort to discover and communicate the socially significant meanings of Christian symbols and tradition;"[116] and public philosophy is "the effort to discover and communicate the significant meanings of common social and political experience in our pluralistic culture"[117] then, in his words, "discovery of the relationship between these two spheres of meaning and of the relationship between the moral norms that these meanings imply is a

[114] For John Coleman the tradition of biblical religion was "the most potent symbolic resource we possess to address the sense of drift in American identity and purpose." David Hollenbach, "Theology and Philosophy in Public: A Symposium on John Courtney Murray's Unfinished Agenda," *Theological Studies* 40 (1979): 706; Robert Lovin affirmed that "A public theology for the next decade must assert that a politics which stresses participation and accountability is both fundamental to the requirements of human community and in keeping with the realities of human personality." Robin Lovin, "Resources for a Public Theology," ed. David Hollenbach, *Theological Studies* 40, Theology and Philosophy in Public: A Symposium on John Courtney Murray's Unfinished Agenda (1979): 710.

[115] "While remaining sympathetic to the possibilities of a public theology, I cannot agree that it should be the dominant mode of policy discourse for the Church." Bryan Hehir, "The Perennial Need for Philosophical Discourse," ed. David Hollenbach, *Theological Studies* 40, Theology and Philosophy in Public: A Symposium on John Courtney Murray's Unfinished Agenda (1979): 711; "A renewed cultivation of the public philosophy is the second task. Murray continually affirmed the need for a 'growing edge' in the public philosophy. The growing edge is the product of continual adaptation of the style and structure of the public philosophy to new conditions and new questions." Ibid., 713.

[116] David Hollenbach, "Editor's Conclusion: A Fundamental Political Theology," ed. David Hollenbach, *Theological Studies* 40, Theology and Philosophy in Public: A Symposium on John Courtney Murray's Unfinished Agenda (1979): 714.

[117] Ibid.

properly theological task."[118] Therefore, the initial Catholic discussion on the possibility of a public theology led the reflection toward the need for a broader theoretical framework in which to set the discussion. As we will see, this confirms to me the final role that Tracy's theology has in the Catholic variant of public theology.

### 2. PARTICULAR SOURCES

Catholic originality when developing a public theology lies especially in the type of sources from which it draws. The reason is the Catholic understanding of the role of Tradition and Magisterium. This role obliges theologians to consider and integrate previous positions and the church's authoritative statements. This effort has given a very particular allure to their work. In my opinion the three main sources from which these authors have drawn are the thought of John Courtney Murray, Vatican II and Catholic social teaching.

#### *a) JOHN COURTNEY MURRAY'S PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY AND THE PROBLEM OF PLURALISM*

John Courtney Murray's work is considered by many as opposed to the idea of a public theology. His main work, *We Hold These Truths*, proposes to build a social consensus between the different religious groups of 1960 U.S. based on the natural law tradition. [119] Only this tradition would have the authority of right reason necessary to bring

[118] Ibid.; Hollenbach names this task as the development of a fundamental political theology. Without a reflection like this at the fundamental theology level, public theology runs the risk of losing "contact with the ways God is actively present in the contemporary social world," and public philosophy runs the risk of "uncritical affirmation of the categories of contemporary culture." Cf. Ibid., 715.

[119] Cf. Murray, *We Hold These Truths*, xii.

together the different positions in society.[120] This would be the inspiration behind the U.S. Declaration of Independence. Therefore, because Murray's arguments are always philosophical ones Murray should be considered a public philosopher but not a public theologian.

However, John Courtney Murray's work has inspired the research of several U.S. Catholics authors who are considered public theologians (David Hollenbach, John Coleman…). The reason for this influence is double. On the one hand, Murray's proposal, although formulated in public philosophy terms, opens the floor for the subsequent development of a public theology. His proposal of a social consensus built through a "conspirancy" between the different religious groups easily invites one to participate in that consensus not just with philosophical arguments but also with theological ones.

On the other hand, modern scholars on Murray's work, such as Julio Martínez, are broadening our understanding of Murray, thanks to their knowledge of the whole of his work. Martínez acknowledges that Murray explicitly avoided the use of religious language or religious symbols in the public sphere.[121] By doing this he wanted to avoid the conflict that he believes it would produce. Yet, the public philosophy that Murray develops,

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[120] "My proposition is that only the theory of natural law is able to give an account of the public moral experience that is the public consensus." Ibid., 110; "Only the theory of natural law, I said, can give an account of the moral experience which is the public consensus, and thus lift it from the level of sheer experience to the higher level of intelligibility toward which, I take, the mind of man aspires." Ibid., 115.

[121] "Mi interpretación es que Murray prefirió el estilo de la filosofía pública con dimensión teológica y que tuvo una clara prevención hacia el uso de lenguaje y símbolos religiosos en el discurso público, por su peligroso desvío hacia el fundamentalismo y el sectarismo." Julio L. Martínez, *"Consenso público" y moral social: Las relaciones entre catolicismo y liberalismo en la obra de John Courtney Murray, S.J.* (Madrid: Univ Pontifica de Comillas, 2002), 507.

although it has no theology or religious symbol in its expression, is founded and supported on theological grounds.[122] It expresses main theological categories. Martínez considers Murray as a public theologian who contributed to the development of American public philosophy.[123] For this, he used a public philosophy which was open to a public theology, although he didn't employ it himself.[124]

Murray spoke of a "growing end" of the American position in the sense of new and different historical circumstances.[125] These new circumstances were the fact of pluralism, especially religious pluralism.[126] Contemporary U.S. public theology would prolong Murray's reflection responding to U.S. society's "growing end" which has become even more religiously pluralistic.

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[122] "Estamos, por consiguiente, ante una filosofía pública enraizada en asunciones teológicas y articulada en categorías filosóficas, que bien podía denominarse teología pública, porque su fundamento y apoyos últimos son teológicos; esto es, que el consenso público que no puede subsistir sin ellos, si bien no los necesita en su expresión discursiva sino en su sustancia o fundamentos." Ibid., 516.

[123] Cf. Ibid., 513.

[124] Cf. Ibid., 515.

[125] "This is our essential patrimony, laboriously wrought out by centuries of thought, further refined and developed in our own land to fit the needs of the new American experiment in government. In addition, as will later appear, the consensus has a growing end, as American society itself has a growing end." Murray, *We Hold These Truths*, 28.

[126] "The coexistence within the one political community of groups who hold divergent and incompatible views with regard to religious questions—those ultimate questions that concern the nature and destiny of man within a universe that stands under the reign of God." Ibid., xiii.

*b) INFLUENCE OF VATICAN II.*

Somehow the concerns that pushed U.S. theologians to go public in the 60's and 70's were already present in the reading that Vatican II made of our times. Vatican II's inspiration and influence has fostered the efforts of the Catholic theologians who wanted to go public with their reflection. Although these insights can be easily grasped from a reading of any of the major conciliar documents, to avoid using the texts in a proof-texting way, I would turn to a particular unified interpretation of the whole of the Council. In doing so I'm following the invitation that the 1985 Synod of Bishops made when using the documents of the Vatican II.[127]

The first influence of Vatican II over public theologians is probably a deeper awareness of the fact of pluralism, which arise in the Council as the consequence of the presence of bishops from all over the world for the first time. Karl Rahner stresses this experience of the council when he interprets it as the first experience of the Catholic Church as a world-church.[128]

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[127] "L'interprétation théologique de la doctrine conciliaire doit prendre en considération tous les documents en eux-mêmes et dans leur étroit rapport les uns avec les autres; ce qui permet d'exposer avec soin le sens intégral des propositions du Concile souvent très complexes et imbriquées. Il faut donner une attention spéciale aux quatre constitutions majeures du Concile… Il n'est pas légitime de détacher l'esprit et la lettre du Concile." Synod of Bishops, *Vingt ans après Vatican II: Synode extraordinaire Rome 1985* (Paris: Le Centurion, 1986), 225.

[128] Cf. Karl Rahner, "Towards a Fundamental Theological Interpretation of Vatican II," *Theological Studies* 40 (1979): 716–727; Public theologians have quoted extensively this Rahnerian interpretation of the Council, cf. David Hollenbach, *Justice, Peace, and Human Rights: American Catholic Social Ethics in a Pluralistic World* (New York: Crossroad, 1988), 91–92; cf. also David Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 148–149.

John O'Malley offers an interpretation of the spirit of the council that includes Rahner's reading but goes beyond it.[129] For O'Malley the spirit of the Council is reflected in these three words: *aggiornamento* as the adaptive capacity of Catholicism to the modern world (to the signs of the times),[130] *ressourcement* as the use of the past in the church to look for criteria in order to judge, change and correct the present of the church,[131] and development as the process through which over time the tradition of the church is enriched and deepened and so it can explain new facts of history.[132]

O'Malley offers an interpretation of his own where he identifies these three main elements in the spirit of the council with the particular literary style of the documents. This style of the documents breaks with the traditional juridical one of previous councils and is similar to the humanistic panegyric so much used by the Fathers of the Church and by the humanistic culture in general.[133] The implications of the revolutionary use of this genre are wide: it looks to foster unity and reconciliation among the readers in order to strive for the ideal, the writer or writers puts herself at the same level as the reader, it tries to show the

[129] "In 1979, five years before his death, the German Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner spoke of Vatican II as opening the third epoch in Christian history. The first epoch was the brief period of Jewish Christianity, which began to end as early as Paul's preaching to the Gentiles. The second epoch ran from that time until Vatican II, the period of Hellenism and the European church. The third period, the postcouncil present, is the period of the world church." John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 13.

[130] Cf. Ibid., 38–39.

[131] Cf. Ibid., 42.

[132] Cf. Ibid., 39.

[133] A panegyric is, in O'Malley's words, "the painting of an idealized portrait in order to excite admiration and appropriation"; the panegyric seeks to persuade and to invite the reader toward an ideal. Cf. Ibid., 47.

sharing of common concerns and goals, it tries, finally, to raise the audience from pettiness to bigger issues.[134] James Keenan sees in O'Malley's idea of the style of the Second Vatican Council the influence of the German moral theologian Bernard Häring.[135] This influence is understandable given the fact that Häring chaired the editorial commission of the Constitution *Gaudium et Spes.*

These three main dimensions of the spirit of the council reflect the insights that invited the development of a Catholic public theology: first the recognition of and adaptation to the fact of pluralism of cultures and values in the modern interconnected world as an exercise of *aggiornamento;* the retrieving of more religious and theological sources in order to enlighten our understanding of the human being as an example of *ressourcement,* and finally the enrichment of tradition through the integration of the neo-scholastic view of reason as a-historical and universal with the new more theological approach to the human being through the assertion of the role of culture in reason is an example of the development of doctrine.[136]

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[134] Cf. Ibid., 48.

[135] "Häring was clearly interested in the Patristics, rhetoric, consolation, persuasion, and conversion. Moreover, unlike the other moral thoelogians, Häring participated in and drafted documents for the Council. No wonder why the style of the council is so clearly Häring's." James F. Keenan, "Bernard Häring's Influence in American Catholic Moral Theology," *Journal of Moral Theology* I, no. 1 (January 2012): 31; Häring's concern to address his moral theology not just to confessors or theologians but to lay men and women, as well as his involvement in ecumenical encounters, can be seen as inspirational for the public theology goal of addressing society. Cf. Ibid., 33–42; Häring explicitly speaks about his goal to widen the audience of his work in the foreword of his major work, cf. Bernard Häring, *The Law of Christ: Moral Theology for Priests and Laity*, vol. 1 (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1961), viiiff.

[136] "These religious and theological dimensions of human existence in history are all appealed to in the development of the neo-scholastic ethic of the earlier documents, as we have seen above. The uniqueness of the Conciliar treatment lies in the fact that their role as interpretative keys for the understanding of the

In my opinion, O'Malley's bright insight on the panegyric genre as the expression of the reality of the church and synthesis of the Council spirit helps us grasp the main inspiration that has fostered the work of the Catholic public theologians. The genre or style used in the writing of the council's documents reflects ultimately the fact of the pluralism that the Fathers found in their gathering itself – as Rahner pointed out in 1979 – as well as the new relationship between church and society that the fact of pluralism supposes. These two elements are major points at the origin of the Catholic variant of public theology.

### c) *Catholic Social Teaching*

When approaching Catholic public theology, we should realize that the authors grouped under this label, when thinking of the ways theology can go public, are not thinking in a vacuum, but they are theologizing within an authoritative tradition, which has developed a huge magisterial corpus on the relationship of revelation and social life, namely the Catholic social teaching.[137] Benedict XVI has recently reminded that the social teaching corpus of church teaching is part of the church's tradition.[138] For Kristin Heyer, the Catholic tradition reflected in Catholic social thought at the same time fosters the

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demands of human dignity in the face of cultural, social and intellectual pluralism has become both fully explicit and methodologically central." David Hollenbach, *Claims in Conflict: Retrieving and Renewing the Catholic Human Rights Tradition* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 127.

[137] As an example of this we can quote the following passage: "In this book we will utilize various themes of Catholic social teaching to describe one brand of communitarian thought, recognizing that the communitarian critics of liberalism are a diverse group, many of whom would differ with our approach." Himes and Himes, *Fullness of Faith*, 36.

[138] Cf. "*Caritas in Veritate*", accessed June 1, 2011, para. 12, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_en.html.

exchange between the Gospel and culture and sets limits in order to avoid a politicization and co-optation of the Church.[139] Catholic social teaching has inspired public theologians in the form of a wide framework in which to develop their reflections as well as in the form of principles and *loci communes* that, inserted in the arguments, help direct the thought.

Looking at Catholic social teaching from an historical perspective, the Catholic authors who work in this line of a public theology stress the change that Vatican II supposed in the Catholic social tradition and they consider themselves heirs of this change. Nevertheless, they do not make a division between both periods but rather draw from all the documents of the social *magisterium* corpus.[140] From the pre-Vatican II period two main elements seem to influence them: the reception of human rights in Catholic social teaching in *Pacem in Terris* and the principle of subsidiarity as it is introduced in *Quadragesimo Anno.*[141]

In my opinion, from the post-Vatican II period, Catholic public theology authors are especially shaped by Paul VI's social magisterium, particularly by his view of the role of

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[139] Cf. Kristin E. Heyer, *Prophetic & Public: The Social Witness of U.S. Catholicism* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2006), 27.

[140] "These passages from *Pacem in Terris* and *Gaudium et Spes* point up a basic tension running through the Catholic tradition. One pole of the tension is represented by the style of theological thought found in *Pacem in Terris*, which closely identifies the *imago Dei* with the fact that human beings are endowed with intelligence and freedom. This is the style of neo-scholastic theology and philosophy… The other pole, represented by *Gaudium et Spes*, places greater emphasis on the contribution which Christian faith can make to the theory of rigths in a pluralistic world. Christians are 'endowed with light from God' which makes clearer both the reality of human dignity and its concrete demands." Hollenbach, *Claims in Conflict*, 109.

[141] Cf. "*Quadragesimo Anno*", accessed June 1, 2011, para. 80, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno_en.html.

local communities, in dialogue with the official teaching, in the development of social doctrine as stated in *Octogesima Adveniens.*[142] This understanding of the development of social thought and teaching in the Catholic Church is the one that marked the main contribution of public theology to the social teaching of the church, its inspiration present in the documents of the U.S. bishops' *The Challenge of Peace* (1983) and *Economic Justice for All* (1986). In a certain way, we can consider this concern for bringing theology into the public sphere as a parallel reflection to Paul VI's effort to implement the council's inspiration and style.

In the case of John Paul II's corpus of social teaching, we can speak not so much of an influence on public theology as an implicit reception of some of this current's insights by the magisterium. This reverse influence is present in different elements. John Paul II expressed explicitly an understanding of social teaching that is very close to the goals of public theology as we can see in his encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis.*[143] Moreover, John

[142] "In the face of such widely varying situations it is difficult for us to utter a unified message and to put forward a solution which has universal validity. Such is not our ambition, nor is it our mission. It is up to the Christian communities to analyze with objectivity the situation which is proper to their own country, to shed on it the light of the Gospel's unalterable words and for action from the social teaching of the Church." "Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens*", accessed June 1, 2011, para. 4, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_letters/documents/hf_p-vi_apl_19710514_octogesima-adveniens_en.html.

[143] "The Church's social doctrine is not a 'third way' between liberal capitalism and Marxist collectivism… but rather the accurate formulation of the results of a careful reflection on the complex realities of human existence, in society and in the international order, in the light of faith and of the Church's tradition." "*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*", accessed June 1, 2011, para. 41, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis_en.html.

Paul II himself developed the social magisterium in a way very similar to what public theology seeks to do.[144]

However, John Paul II's social teaching supposes a reinterpretation of some main points of Paul VI's, particularly of the role of local communities in the historical development of social teaching as affirmed in *Octogesima Adveniens* 4. The historicity and development of social doctrine is minimized, the elaboration of social doctrine is assigned exclusively to the hierarchy, and the role of local communities –including the national bishops conferences – is reduced to applying the principles stated by the encyclicals to the particular situation. This centralization of the social teaching, or social doctrine following John Paul II terminology, is the expression of a deeper shift in the understanding of the church itself which stresses the role of the *magisterium*, thus minimizing the participation of the people of God.[145] Although both ecclesiological approaches are ultimately complementary,[146] it is clear that John Paul II's approach is in tension with the understanding of the church's life that is at the birth of public theology.[147]

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[144] As an example of this we can think of his religious understanding of human rights as expressed in his encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, or his use of the concept of solidarity as a way to express in public terms the Christian virtue of charity, cf. Ibid., para. 38.

[145] "Although the historically constituted nature of the social teaching of the magisterium has already been documented... the encyclical writings of John Paul II intentionally stray from the earlier emerging articulation of a historically conscious methodology in preference for a transcendental or Thomistic personalism as the basis of universal and absolute norms transcending all historical contingency." Mary Elsbernd, "What Ever Happened to Octogesima Adveniens?" *Theological Studies* 56 (1995): 40. This enlightening article studies the reinterpretation of *Octogesima Adveniens* 4 in John Paul II's magisterium showing the shift that it supposes at the ecclesiological level.

[146] "Finally, with regard to the relationship of Church and world, a shift took place from an ecclesiology which saw the Church as a pilgrim people in the world to an ecclesiology of the Church as the guardian of

Finally we still have to see how the magisterium of Benedict XVI relates and influences public theology. In principle it could be a very fruitful relationship, particularly because of Benedict XVI's explicit understanding of the role of the Catholic Church in public life which is very close to the public theology view.[148] However, Benedict XVI's stress on the role of natural law in the cultural dialogue drifts apart from, although it doesn't contradict, the efforts of public theology.[149]

### 3. DAVID TRACY'S PARADIGM

As noted above, the different ways of bringing theology into public life are very much shaped by the Christian tradition behind it. In the case of the Catholic variant of public theology the main concern of theologians is accomplishing a proper mediation between the insights of revelation and secular knowledge, a mediation that articulate both approaches without compromising their integrity. David Tracy, working inside the Catholic tradition, has developed a very important understanding of this mediation, which has inspired the work of many other public theologians.

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truth which it dispenses to the world. We argue, however, that both of these ecclesiological dimensions are needed as a kind of ongoing self-corrective mechanism. The diminishment of one of them results in the impoverishment of social teaching as a whole." Ibid., 60.

[147] Authors in the public theology current tend to have an ecclesiological approach wherein lay people and local communities have a wider role in the life of the Catholic Church. For example cf. Coleman, *An American Strategic Theology*, 31.

[148] "The Christian religion and other religions can offer their contribution to development only if God has a place in the public realm, specifically in regard to its cultural, social, economic, and particularly its political dimensions." "*Caritas in Veritate*," para. 56.

[149] "Evolving societies must remain faithful to all that is truly human in their traditions… In all cultures there are examples of ethical convergence, some isolated, some interrelated, as an expression of the one human nature, willed by the Creator; the tradition of ethical wisdom knows this as the natural law." Ibid., para. 59.

David Tracy is considered one of the main representatives of public theology, and yet he has never embraced such a label. The reason is that Tracy, more than developing a particular theological analysis of any social issue, has developed a theoretical method to do so, and especially has read the whole of theology from the category of publicness. Of all the authors around the idea of a theology done in public he is the one who achieves the deepest speculative reflection.[150] His paradigm is the overarching one in the Catholic variant of public theology in the U.S. and therefore can be considered as a privileged method in order to bring theology into the public sphere.

David Tracy's concern for publicness in theology can be traced back to the influence of Paul Tillich's theology on him. Paul Tillich already developed a method of theology where systematic theology is correlated with an existential reading of the human situation.[151] This role of publicness is already present in Tracy's 1975 book *Blessed Rage for Order* where he mentions tangentially this concern as a distant goal of his efforts.[152] In fact, Tracy has been aware of the development of the term through his contact with Martin Marty, who was also professor at the University of Chicago; and following the intellectual

[150] "Those conversant with the ongoing discussions about civil religion and public theology are often familiar with the pivotal roles played by Bellah, Marty, Hollenbach, and Tracy in the development of the terms and frequently acknowledge the contributions they made to the field. Indeed, works by Marty, Hollenbach and Tracy often inform the understanding and assumptions others have about public theology and frame their discussion of it." Breitenberg, "To tell the truth: Will the real public theology please stand up?," 57.

[151] Cf. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 3–68.

[152] "A revisionist dogmatic theology must find some way to interrelate critically both its public character and its explicit relationship to a particular religious tradition." David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), 250, note 1.

debates on the topic in the Catholic context, as we can see in several references to this debate in the footnotes of his *Analogical Imagination*.[153]

Tracy's correlational paradigm was formulated in his 1981 book *The Analogical Imagination*. The ideas he presented then have remained the key points of his thought since then. However he has nuanced his position over the years as he dialogued with liberation and political theology, and some critical theories first, and as he later got involved in interreligious dialogue. I will first present more in length the original version of his model and then will mention the nuances that his subsequent works introduced.

*a) THE CRITICAL-CORRELATIONAL MODEL IN THE ANALOGICAL IMAGINATION*

In spite of the complexity and length of Tracy's book *The Analogical Imagination,* his main goal throughout the entire book is clearly stated in his initial assertion in the preface of the book:

> In a culture of pluralism must each religious tradition finally either dissolve into some lowest common denominator or accept a marginal existence as one interesting but purely private opinion? Neither alternative is acceptable to anyone seriously committed to the truth of any major religious tradition. The need is to form a new and inevitably complex theological strategy that will avoid privatism by articulating the genuine claims of religion to truth.[154]

[153] Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 36, note 8; 36, note 26; 38, note 39; 34, note 12; 37, note 34; 403, note 56.

[154] Ibid., xi.

A main thesis of Tracy is the public character of theology, that is to say, its publicness. In Tracy's terms, a public discourse is one that "discloses meanings and truths which in principle can transform all human beings in some recognizable personal, social, political, ethical, cultural or religious manner."[155] Theology is public, thus, for two reasons: First, the questions that theology addresses are "questions of the meaning and truth of our existence as human beings in solitude, and in society, history and our cosmos,"[156] these questions and theology's answers to them are addressed to every fellow human being.[157] And second, theology is a public discourse because of the actual content of its reflection: God himself. Theology reflects upon God, and a God who, for Christians, Jews and Muslims, is universal. Therefore, the theologian develops not a private discourse but a public one that speaks to every human being.[158] This assertion of theology's publicness is a major feature in Tracy's theology and positions him against the privatization that contemporary secularism wants to impose on religion.

### *i. Pluralism, the Major Trait of Modern Society*

Because Tracy wants to develop a theological method considering publicness as an essential trait of theology, the starting point of his reflection is, the reality of the society to which theology is addressed. In this regard, pluralism can be considered as a dominant

[155] Ibid., 55.

[156] Ibid., 4.

[157] Cf. Ibid.

[158] "Yet the existential radicality of that fundamental faith in God should help one see the logical need for universality to correctly understand the divine reality… If this faith in God is serious, then any discourse about it must be universal and public." Ibid., 51–52.

feature of contemporary society. In marked opposition to other theological positions which see pluralism as threatening,[159] Tracy has a positive view of it[160] although he acknowledges its attendant risks.[161] Here Tracy is eager to affirm the fact of contemporary pluralism but including "an affirmation of truth and public criteria for that affirmation."[162] This affirmation would allow us to overcome any risk of relativism.

David Tracy states clearly that his understanding of pluralism is a positive one.[163] Tracy's positive attitude toward modern pluralism comes from the realization that pluralism is a necessary feature of human life, so it is present even inside Christianity.[164] Pluralism is the natural result of the necessarily different interpretation of any classic that each human being makes. The first expression of this necessary pluralism within Christianity is the

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[159] An example would be an author like Stanley Hauerwas, who expresses this idea in expressions like the following: "Only by hope and patience, therefore, are we able to sustain a self capable of withstanding the disintegration that is threatened by the inescapable plurality and often unresolved nature of our moral existence." Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 128.

[160] "For those like the present author who accept pluralism as a fundamental enrichment of the human condition, hope must lie elsewhere." Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, xi.

[161] "A simple affirmation of pluralism can mask a repressive tolerance where all is allowed because nothing finally is taken seriously. Or pluralism can cover a genial confusion." Ibid.

[162] Ibid., xi.

[163] "For those like the present author who accept pluralism as a fundamental enrichment of the human condition, hope must lie elsewhere... to affirm pluralism responsibly must include an affirmation of truth and public criteria for that affirmation." Ibid., xi.

[164] "The reality of diversity must be affirmed as fact in the New Testament, in the entire Christian tradition, in the contemporary Christian community, in the diverse life journey and discernments in the contemporary situation. The reality of pluralism is a value: a value to enrich each by impelling new journeys into both particularity and ecumenicity." Ibid., 254.

plurality of literary genres which constitute the New Testament, a plurality that nevertheless implies a unity.[165]

However, Tracy recognizes the fragmentation that contemporary pluralism produces in our lives:[166] Although he sees theology as addressing questions that concern every fellow human being in any cultural setting,[167] Tracy identifies three distinct and related social realities which the theologian addresses, each one with a particular criterion of plausability: the wider society, the academy and the church.[168] Tracy calls these three social realities "publics."[169] The fragmentation is present in the fact that each of these publics has its own plausibility structures that would shape the theological discourse addressed to it. The theologian's message will speak to the three publics, but it will be principally addressed to one of them.

If Tracy accepts the reality of this fragmentation, it is because he sees a theological significance in these three sociological publics. Tracy comprehends the world as the Gospel

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[165] "The basic unity and diversity of the New Testament expressions may be found not only in the earliest witnesses but in the later witnesses as well through the genres of proclamation-confession to narrative to symbol to reflective thought." Ibid., 264.

[166] "The pluralism of cultural worlds has enriched us all with new visions of our common lives and new possibilities for an authentic life. yet it does so at a price we can seldom face with equanimity. For each of us seems to become not a single self but several selves at once." Ibid., 4.

[167] "Whatever the social location of a particular theology, that common commitment demands a commitment to authentic publicness, the attempt to speak from a particular social locus in such manner that one also speaks across the range of all three publics." Ibid., 5.

[168] "Each theologian addresses three distinct and related social realities: the wider society, the academy and the church." Ibid.

[169] He also speaks of "reference groups" or "generalized other." Cf. Ibid., 21.

of John does, as an ambiguous reality where both good and evil are present. Faith in God will allow us to see the world as contingent and ambiguous but, at the same time loved by God and by the Christians.[170] Therefore, the world is for him "a theological locus for Christian self-understanding;"[171] the world should be approached and read theologically in order to find God in it.

### *ii. A Theology Adequate for a Pluralistic Society*

Because each of the three publics in the world has different plausibility structures and adequacy criteria, a certain division of labor in theology is necessary in order to address each one of the three publics. Therefore Tracy proposes a subdivision of theology into three disciplines: fundamental, systematic and practical theology.[172] Fundamental theology would address the public of academia, systematic theology the public of the church and practical theology the public of society.

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[170] "The passionate Christian and Yahwist suspicion of the world and its pretentions and delusions—its refusal to face its own contingency and ambiguity—should never become the kind of negation that eventuates in the resentful bitterness of 'withdrawal.' Rather the Christian should be released for the world as it really is: arbitrary, contingent, ambiguous, loved by God and by the Christian." Ibid., 48.

[171] Ibid., 49.

[172] "Then they may recognize the reality of three publics of theology grounded in the strictly theological realities church and world, and three distinct but related sets of criteria proper to the claims to meaning and truth in each public grounded in the intrinsic publicness of the affirmation of God. Then they may also decide that some division of labor is necessary. The analysis of one such division –into fundamental, systematic and practical theology—now demands attention." Ibid., 54.

This apparent fragmentation doesn't diminish the public character of the single theological discourse.[173] Tracy affirms that, ultimately, each theologian is addressing all three publics. Therefore, theology requires some common ultimate criteria of adequacy that could be applied to the three publics.[174] What is common in all theological disciplines and constitutes the base of theology's publicness? For Tracy there are two major constants in any theological reflection: it supposes an interpretation of the religious tradition that should fit some "criteria of appropriateness" to the tradition;[175] and it supposes an interpretation of the religious dimension of the contemporary situation.[176] What is particular to each theological discipline? The defense of an interpretation of the tradition's truth-status in the contemporary situation. This would be the role of systematic theology. The defense should then be developed according to the truth criteria of each public,[177] hence the need of the three disciplines in theology: fundamental, systematic and practical theology.

Fundamental theology, in its goal to make faith understandable to a rational audience, would seem to be the discipline in theology which embodies its publicness. However, Tracy asserts that the whole of theology, especially systematic theology, has the

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[173] "Each [of the three disciplines] is concerned with all three publics. Each is irrevocably involved in claims to meaning and truth. Each is, in fact, determined by a relentless drive to genuine publicness to and for all three publics." Ibid., 31.

[174] Ibid., 29.

[175] Cf. Ibid., 59.

[176] Cf. Ibid., 60.

[177] Cf. Ibid., 61–62.

characteristic of publicness.[178] This implies that the task of any theologian will ultimately be to establish mutually critical correlations between the interpretation of the tradition and the interpretation of the contemporary situation he wants to publicly address.[179]

Tracy focuses particularly on systematic theology because this discipline takes charge of those common elements of every branch of theology by interpreting the tradition and the situation. It has, therefore, a particular normative status in theology. It is the key then to show how publicness is also a dimension of systematic theology. In order to do so he understands systematic theology as basically a hermeneutical discipline.[180] Hermeneutical means for Tracy that it happens in the back and forth movement of a conversation.[181] Systematic theology, thus, has as its goal to interpret the tradition in a conversation with the present situation.

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[178] "Systematic theology, in fact possesses a genuine publicness distinct from but related to the obvious publicness of fundamental theology." Ibid., 82.

[179] Cf. Ibid., 81; Paul Tillich, the first to use the idea of correlation applied to the theological effort, sees the term correlation as having three different meanings: "It can designate the correspondence of different series of data, as in statistical charts; it can designate the logical interdependence of concepts, as in polar relations; and it can designate the real interdependence of things or events in structural wholes." Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:60 In the case of Tracy these correlations are mutual and critical.

[180] "All contemporary systematic theology can be understood as fundamentally hermeneutical." Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 104.

[181] "For every event of understanding, in order to produce a new interpretation, mediates between our past experience and the understanding embodied in our linguistic tradition and the present event of understanding occasioned by a fidelity to the logic of the question in the back-and-forth movement of the conversation. We constantly mediate, translate, from our past understanding to our present one." Ibid., 101.

### *iii. A Hermeneutical Framework for Pluralism: The Classic*

Tracy develops then a framework that will allow him to present systematic theology's discourse through critical correlations as public. He introduces the concept of the "classic." The term classic is used by Tracy to refer to "certain expressions of the human spirit [which] so disclose a compelling truth about our lives that we cannot deny them some kind of normative status."[182] Our cultural experience has thus a normative status. Tracy describes the contact with any cultural classic like this: "we find ourselves "caught up" in its world, we are shocked, surprised, challenged by its startling beauty and its recognizable truth, its instinct for the essential."[183] This concept of the classic includes great masterpieces of literature and arts (like the plays of Shakespeare) but also other pieces of so-called "low culture" such as some pieces of jazz music or some African-American spirituals, or even films.[184]

The contact with the classic, and the responses to it, are understood by Tracy in four movements very much inspired by Gadamer: first the interpreter of the classic approaches it with a certain preunderstanding of the topic; in a second moment the interpreter is exposed to the classic and its claim of attention on me; in a third moment the interpreter will begin a dialogue with the classic; and in a fourth one the dialogue will be open to the

[182] Ibid., 108.

[183] Ibid., 110.

[184] Cf. Ibid., 108.

whole community.[185] This scheme supposes that there is a basic plurality of understandings of every classic, because each one approaches it and dialogues with it from her own circumstances,[186] but there is also a normative stance based in the community of readers of the classic that can confirm or not the interpretation.[187] There should be then some criteria to evaluate the validity of an interpretation of a classic, these criteria are named criteria of relative adequacy by Tracy.[188]

Among the classics in a culture there are also religious classics. In Tracy's words these suppose "a claim to meaning and truth as the event of a disclosure-concealement of the whole of reality by the power of the whole—as, in some sense, a radical and finally gracious mystery."[189] This religious classic, because of its character of truth, also has a public status in culture.[190] The contact with the religious classic is seen by Tracy as dialectic. There is first a participation in the classic by the intensification of the experience that the classic produces in us, a moment called "manifestation"; and there is then an

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[185] Cf. Ibid., 118–120.

[186] "Every classic contains its own plurality and encourages a pluralism of readings." Ibid., 113.

[187] "If one's own experience has been verified by other readers, especially by the community of capable readers over the centuries, the reflective judgment should prove that much more secure." Ibid., 116.

[188] Cf. Ibid., 121; the idea of finding criteria of relative adequacy for religious symbol system is a main point in Tracy's thought since his first works: "The dominant criteriological concerns of an investigation of various symbol-systems is to show the relative experiential adequacy of one symbol-system (e.g., the Christian) both to the meaning and truth of religious theism and to the meaningfulness of this particular symbol-system for the human situation." Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order*, 80.

[189] Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 163.

[190] "Religious classics should also be accorded a public status in the wider culture" Ibid., 233.

experience of distanciation and non-participation in the classic, what he calls "proclamation."[191] In Christian theology these two moments would correspond to the rubrics "sacrament" and "word". The religious experience supposes both moments of the dialectic and cannot do away with any of them.

Christianity is based on the event and person of Jesus Christ as God's self-manifestation. This event is not only a past event but a present one.[192] This event is beyond any relative adequacy.[193] This event is manifested in many symbols, images, and doctrines. These are the Christian classics, the first of which are Scriptures, which become the "more relatively adequate expressions of the community's past and present experience of the Risen Lord."[194]

The systematic theologian can be understood, thus, ultimately as the interpreter of a religious classic—of the Christian classic in particular.[195] Because of the truth for every

[191] "When the dialectic of intensification of particularity releasing itself to a radical sense of participation predominates, the religious expression will be named 'manifestation;' when the dialectic of intensification of particularity releasing itself to a sense of radical nonparticipation dominates, the religious expression will be named 'proclamation'." Ibid., 203.

[192] "The classic event for the Christian is the religious event of God's self-manifestation in the person of Jesus Christ: an event that happened, happens and will happen." Ibid., 249.

[193] Cf. Ibid., 248.

[194] Cf. Ibid.

[195] "The systematic theologian is the interpreter of religious classics." Ibid., 130.

human being that every classic conveys, the religious classic included, the theologian's discourse is a public one that contributes to the welfare of society.[196]

### *iv. A Major Locus for Theology: The Human Situation*

But for Tracy, every theologian lives in particular historical and social conditions, what he calls a "situation." The situation for Tracy, following Tillich, is "those interpretations which are carried out in every period of history under all kinds of psychological and sociological conditions."[197] The situation is then the philosophical interpretation of the human existence after the analysis of the psychological and socio-economic conditions of that existence by the social and human sciences.[198] Tracy asserts that the tradition the theologian interprets helps in the interpretation of the situation, but also that the theologian lives inside a situation, in a culture and a history, which conditions the understanding of the tradition itself.[199]

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[196] "Insofar as the systematic theologian performs that hermeneutical task well, insofar as these religious classics are classics and this tradition is a classical tradition, the theologian, like all interpreters, contributes to the common good, to the realm of authentic publicness." Ibid., 131.

[197] Ibid., 340.

[198] Cf. Ibid., 340.

[199] Cf. Ibid., 339.

*v. A Method for Theology: The Analogical Imagination*

The role of the systematic theologian is to articulate mutually critical correlations between the event that helps to interpret the situation and the situation that helps to interpret the event.[200] Tracy defines this paradigm of systematic theology in a famous expression:

> Each theologian articulates some personal theological response to that event… a response articulating some series of mutually critical correlations between an interpretation of the event (and the traditions and forms mediating the event in the present) and an interpretation of the situation (and the traditions and forms mediating the reality).[201]

This task of the systematic theologian requires a particular theological language: the analogical imagination. A language that should include two different languages: analogy and dialectic.[202] The language of analogy searches for similarities-in-difference that help us put order in the whole of reality composed of God, self and world.[203] The language of dialectic supposes the negation of any univocity to stress the radical mystery we are

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[200] At some point in The Analogical Imagination Tracy seems to suggest that the possible critical correlation with the Christian symbols can be identified with Richard Niebuhrs's types of relationship between Christ and Culture. Tracy would seem to privilege the Christ transformer of culture type: "In fact, what one most often finds in contemporary Christian theology are what might be named variations on the final classical ideal type of H. R. Niebuhr: Christ transformer of culture. More exactly, one finds distinct interpretations via distinct foci of response and recognition in the Christian tradition critically correlated to distinct foci of fundamental questions and responses in the contemporary situation." Ibid., 374.

[201] Ibid., 406.

[202] "Two major conceptual languages have served as the principal candidates for this task in theology: analogical and dialectical languages." Ibid., 409.

[203] Cf. Ibid., 408.

expressing.[204] Using these two languages – both of them necessary – Christian systematic theology develops an analogical imagination that, beginning with a paradigmatic focal point, the event of Jesus Christ, articulates the ordered relationships between God, self and world.[205] This view of the theological method as an analogical imagination that supposes analogy but also negation is Tracy's reinterpretation of the classical theological idea of a *via eminentiae* which integrates kataphatic and apophatic theology.[206]

### *vi. Summary*

In summary, when facing contemporary pluralism Tracy is seeking to claim theology's truth status in a way that integrates the plurality. Although the different theological disciplines should develop a discourse that is suitable for the particular way of arguing of each public, theology as a whole, in its main form of systematic theology, has a claim of truth of its own that is above the different publics. This claim of truth is the truth of the answers the theologian develops when interpreting the religious tradition to the ultimate existential questions that he brings with him in the interpretation of the present situation.[207] This view supposes a more comprehensive view of rationality than a purely

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[204] Cf. Ibid., 413.

[205] "The always-already, not-yet event of grace named Jesus Christ mediated through the tradition serves, therefore, as the paradigmatic focal meaning for any Christian systematic theology. That event discloses the theological possibilities of ordered relationships among God-self-world." Ibid., 425.

[206] "The major explicitly analogical traditions in theology have correctly insisted that in the theological use of analogies, the dissimilarities between God and world are as great as the similarities; the *via eminentiae* is possible only on condition of its constant fidelity to the *via negationis*." Ibid., 409.

[207] "Theologians, therefore, in collaborative, interdisciplinary work with their colleagues, need to ask what after all is the present meaning and truth of the interpreted tradition and interpreted contemporary situation, by

instrumental and empirical one which is promoted today. Rationality when addressing public and social issues should be informed, not only by instrumental reason – economy, sociology or other social sciences – but also by the symbolic resources of art, philosophy and religion.[208]

*b) LATER DEVELOPMENTS OF TRACY'S METHOD*

In a later work, Tracy has developed his correlational method in two senses. On the one hand, he has developed a deeper consideration of the influence of the context and circumstances of the person in his reflection, as well as a sharper critical edge which takes more into account the role of sin in history and society. On the other hand, he has applied his method to the interreligious dialogue in a coherent consequence of his appreciation of religious pluralism as a main trait of the present situation. This double development makes his public theology proposal even more comprehensive allowing it to dialogue with critical theories as well as to incorporate insights from interreligious dialogue.

Firstly, in his 1987 book *Plurality and Ambiguity,* Tracy applies his correlational model to our post-modern world.[209] He interprets the present situation as one marked by a

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focusing on those fundamental questions constituting religious questions and those fundamental responses constituting particular religious traditions, and on establishing mutually critical correlations between both sets of interpretations." Ibid., 81.

[208] "If theologians share the understanding of society presented here, they are likely to share the present author's concern to fight against the privatizing forces which separates the realm of culture form the realm of policy. In sum, they will join other humanists in the demand for a more comprehensive understanding of rationality, in a discourse rationally and responsibly informed in its fuller theories of the good by the symbolic resources of art, philosophy and religion." Ibid., 31.

[209] "Having established that the postmodern decentering of the subject and the acknowledgment of the radical plurality and ambiguity of discourse and history are the unavoidable features of the situation, Tracy moves on

plurality of interpretations of reality as well as by a developed conscience of the ambiguity of history after the different historical tragedies that our world has gone through. The relationship between plurality and ambiguity is based on language, which at the same time is the vehicle of any interpretation and supposes a whole history and society which hands on to us the language.[210]

The correlation of religions with this situation – he speaks now more of the back and forth of a conversation – allows religion to highlight the shortcomings of any societal structure. On the one hand, religion then gives us resistance when facing modern societies and their ideologies because it can name the reality of sin,[211] as well as the hope that comes from knowing that there is a Reality who sustains this world.[212] On the other, the plurality and ambiguity present in society and history show us the plurality and the ambiguity present in religion itself.[213] This forces us to take also a first critical stance toward any

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to critically and mutually relate religion and that situation." Martinez, *Confronting the Mystery of God: Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies*, 208.

[210] "To study language as discourse is to discover plurality. It is also to rediscover the contingency and ambiguity of history and society. To study grammar and rhetoric is also to discover plurality and to rediscover with the ancients that the ethical and the political are one." David Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion, Hope* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 65.

[211] Cf. Ibid., 230.

[212] Cf. Ibid., 84.

[213] "There are, therefore, many good reasons to pause before entering to speak on behalf of interpreting the religious classic. The religions, in fact, are even more intensely pluralistic and ambiguous than art, morality, philosophy, and politics." Ibid., 86; this idea was already present, although in a very initial stage, in *The Analogical Imagination*, cf. Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 236.

religious classic in order to unveil the ideologies behind it.[214] This critical stance comes from listening to the voice of those oppressed as well as from a particular critical theory.[215]

Therefore, we can notice how there has been a certain turn in Tracy toward a wider consideration of the influence of the context in our theological reflection as well as the presence of the negative dimension of sin in any human structure. There is thus a deeper skepticism toward the capacity of human reason in this last stage of Tracy's work to grasp a truth about reality, but without renouncing the claims of truth that any classic can make on us, after properly criticizing its implicit ideology.

Referring to this development in Tracy, Kristin Heyer speaks of a passage from a model of correlation to one of conversation,[216] this new model would receive and answer postliberal critiques to Tracy's correlational paradigm, acknowledging more the role of identity and context in our understanding.[217]

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[214] "No classic text comes to us without the plural and ambiguous history of effects of its own production and all its former receptions." Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity*, 69.

[215] Cf. Ibid., 73.

[216] Cf. Kristin E. Heyer, "How Does Theology Go Public? Rethinking the Debate between David Tracy and George Lindbeck," *Political Theology* 5, no. 3 (2004): 309; this reinterpretation of the correlational model as a conversation reinforces the publicness of theology: "Insofar as one defends argument and conversation, one defends a public realm. Insofar as one allows argument to be narrowed to scientistic and technological models, one abandons the classic American Enlightenment tradition of 'civic discourse' and its comprehensive notion of reason." David Tracy, "Catholic Classics in American Liberal Culture," in *Catholicism and Liberalism: Contributions to American Public Philosophy*, ed. R. Bruce Douglass and David Hollenbach (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 210–211.

[217] "I argue that Tracy's most recent methods survive postliberal criticism and provide more adequate responses to the challenges posed by postmodernism." Heyer, "How Does Theology Go Public? Rethinking the Debate between David Tracy and George Lindbeck," 308.

Secondly, in his 1994 book *Dialogue with the other* Tracy developed an idea outlined in the epilogue of *The Analogical Imagination*. If theology interprets the religious classic reflecting from the human situation of the theologian, and the present human situation is one of religious pluralism, then the religious classics should be interpreted in the light of the dialogue with other religions. Therefore, in this later book, Tracy rereads his method in the light of interreligious dialogue. In *The Analogical Imagination* Tracy understood theology as a dialectic between two moments in the work of the theologian: manifestation and the subsequent proclamation. He now affirms that this same dialectic is better expressed as a dialectic between two perspectives on God, the mystical and the prophetical.[218] This new perspective supposes an even more hermeneutical understanding of theology. We will study this position in more detail in subsequent chapters.

### c) *Importance of Tracy for Public Theology*

David Tracy's paradigm of critical correlation and analogical imagination has set the model for a theology with a public emphasis in the Catholic context. Tracy has thought about ways to mediate Christian symbols to society respecting the autonomy of society and of secular knowledge and looking for an integration of both theology and secular thought. This more Catholic approach makes him a very good theoretical framework for further developments.

[218] Cf. David Tracy, *Dialogue with the Other: The Inter-religious Dialogue* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 1–7.

Although other authors have not always assumed the whole of his paradigm,[219] there is an evident "tracian" inspiration in the work of many of the other Catholic public theologians. This allows me to consider Tracy's critical-correlational paradigm as the privileged method to bring theology in public among U.S. public theologians. In particular four main public theologians we will be considering in this work acknowledge at some point the inspiration they have received from Tracy. Firstly, John Coleman uses the term correlation when describing the task of theology in words very similar to Tracy.[220] He also introduces some reflections on the role of Christian symbols in theology in a style very close to Tracy's.[221] Secondly, David Hollenbach, in a 1989 essay called "Fundamental Theology and the Christian Moral Life,"[222] reflecting on the debate about the distinctiveness of Christian ethics, explicitly adopts Tracy's model as the paradigm for his Christian social ethics. In the way Hollenbach develops his own social ethics we can see reflected this paradigm. [223] Finally, Michael and Kenneth Himes, in their 1993 book

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[219] The theoretical concept of the classic, a main point in Tracy's theory, has not been used as much as his general idea of a critical correlation between tradition and situation.

[220] "The necessity of a correlation between the Christian fact and human experience flows from the universal claim of Christianity." Coleman, *An American Strategic Theology*, 73.

[221] "The truth of the symbols of the Christian faith is more than mere conceptual truth. Their truth lies in their power to make true… All of Christian symbols are, in some sense, sacramental symbols." Ibid.

[222] David Hollenbach, "Fundamental Theology and the Christian Moral Life," in *Faithful Witness: Foundations of Theology for Today's Church*, ed. Leo J. O'Donovan and T. Howland Sanks (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 167–184.

[223] "The hermeneutic of critical correlation illustrated in these two examples is directly relevant to the debate about the distinctiveness of Christian ethics. The interplay between the sources that come from the past (Scripture and tradition) and those that we exercise in the present (reason and experience) suggest that the structure of this debate arises from a false way of posing the question." Ibid., 182.

*Fullness of Faith,*[224] present an understanding of the theological work and its publicness which is clearly formulated with Tracy's concepts.[225]

Although each one of these four public theologians develops an original and particular public theology, the common influence of Tracy in them is evident. This influence is repeatedly the effect of a deep complementarity between Tracy's thought and the work of these other theologians. On the one hand, David Tracy, although he formulates his idea of practical theology as a sub-discipline of theology,[226] does not fully develop his understanding of practical theology. Rather he focuses more on the relationship between systematic and fundamental theology.[227] In my opinion this is reflected in an underdeveloped reflection on the concept of the situation as it is exposed in chapter 8 of *The Analogical Imagination.* This concept will embrace the role and influence of reality in the work of the theologian. I think that the work of Coleman, Hollenbach, and the Himes brothers helps us to fill this lacuna by showing three examples of how practical theology could unfold according to Tracy's model.

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[224] Himes and Himes, *Fullness of Faith*.

[225] Niebuhr's theology can be considered public because "[his] use of classic religious symbols allowed the disclosive-transformative power of these symbols to be appropriated by Christians and non-Christians alike." Ibid., 19.

[226] "Practical theology will ordinarily analyze some radical situations of ethical-religious import (sexism, racism, classism, elitism, anti-Semitism, economic exploitation, environmental crisis, etc.) in some philosophical, social-scientific, culturally analytic or religiously prophetic manner." Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 58.

[227] "As noted before, I hope to return to a fuller treatment of practical theology in a future book." Ibid., 98, note 117.

On the other hand, Coleman, Hollenbach and the Himes brothers approach theology from the field of Christian social ethics, with a strong influence of Catholic Social Teaching. Their particular appropriation of Tracy's model allows their thought to have a deeper systematic allure. Nevertheless, it is important to add that some main points of Tracy's model have not been fully implemented by these authors, particularly the concept of the classic. In summary, this contribution of Tracy to the work of these theologians could be the answer to David Hollenbach's acknowledgment in the 1979 symposium "Theology and philosophy in public" of the need of a fundamental political theology which reflects the relationship between public theology as "the effort to discover and communicate the socially significant meanings of Christian symbols and tradition,"[228] and public philosophy as "the effort to discover and communicate the significant meaning of common social and political experience in our pluralistic culture."[229]

### 4. PUBLIC THEOLOGY AND CATHOLIC SOCIAL THEORISTS

I will now proceed to review the work of four major Catholic public theologians who have done their work in dialogue with concrete social questions – by way of contrast to the more theoretical approach of David Tracy. I call them Catholic social theorists, using the term that Tracy himself gives to a series of authors who are usually called public

[228] Hollenbach, "Editor's Conclusion: A Fundamental Political Theology," 714.

[229] Ibid.; Hollenbach affirms that "Without such reflection public theology will lose contact with the ways God is actively present in the contemporary social world. Similarly, without such reflection public philosophy risks uncritical affirmation of the categories of contemporary culture and uncritical appropriation of cultural biases which are in contradiction with the moral content of Christian faith." Ibid., 715.

theologians.[230] The term seems to be very suitable because it highlights the fact that these authors' reflections start from a decidedly social ethics point of view. After the review of these authors, I will present an example of a public theology argument by one of the authors in order to illustrate more concretely what public theology is about.

Beyond doubt, many relevant authors are missing in this selection. It is not my goal to present a comprehensive overview of Catholic public theology, but merely to present some of the main authors in whose work the relationship between theology and social issues is clearest. Regarding this, I do not include the work of a major Catholic author, Bryan Hehir, who is considered also a public theologian.[231] This is not only for limitations of space, but also because Rev. Hehir, although he has become more open over time to the idea of a public theology,[232] has a less explicitly theological approach which makes more difficult the task of characterizing his contribution to public theology.[233]

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[230] "Among those later descendants are American Catholic social theorists. They, too, have learned to abandon earlier notions of an ahistorical reason without abandoning reason itself. They have learned... to employ their own central inner-Christian symbols and doctrines... in a public manner." Tracy, "Catholic Classics in American Liberal Culture," 211.

[231] "Hehir's own approach to social ethics exemplifies a public church, accepting social responsibilities for the common good and envisioning its teaching role as encompassing participation in the wider societal debate" Heyer, *Prophetic & Public*, 61. To anyone interested in approaching Hehir's thought I highly recommend Kristin Heyer's synthesis of it as reflected in this book.

[232] Julio Martínez points out that in the 1979 symposium in *Theological Studies* Hehir didn't reject public theology as such but its consideration as the main form of participation of the church in public life. Martínez also make reference to some nuances Hehir introduced to his position in later writings. Cf. Martínez, *"Consenso público" y moral social*, 465.

[233] "The complexity of the major social issues we face, combined with the need to enlist allies who must be persuaded of both the justice and feasibility of specific proposals, requires the sophisticated structure of the kind of philosophical rigorous social ethic which the Catholic tradition has produced in the past." Hehir, "The Perennial Need for Philosophical Discourse," 712.

*a) DAVID HOLLENBACH*

David Hollenbach's thought can be found in five books written by him,[234] plus a good number of essays in other books and innumerable articles in different reviews. Hollenbach seems to see himself as developing the "growing edge" of John Courtney Murray's thought.[235] By the end of his life, Murray had foreseen the role of pluralism in American society and suggested ways to answer this challenge.[236] Hollenbach seems to continue this effort, although from a different perspective. Two main lines of reflection throughout Hollenbach's work – namely, human rights as the minimum participation in the common good, and a common good which integrates pluralism – could be integrated in a main question present in his thought: How can we combine universality and Christianity specificity in the Church's social mission after Vatican II? This question reflects very precisely the concerns at the bottom of all the authors we have considered public theologians and it clearly resembles David Tracy's own goal.

David Hollenbach's thought can be presented paying attention to three interrelated elements: a reading of reality which identifies pluralism as a major trait of the contemporary world, a method for a theology done in public adapted to such a reality, and

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[234] Hollenbach, *Claims in Conflict*; *Nuclear Ethics: A Christian Moral Argument* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983); *Justice, Peace, and Human Rights*; *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*; *The Global Face of Public Faith: Politics, Human Rights, and Christian Ethics* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2003).

[235] "The purpose was to raise some questions about the 'growing end' of American Catholic public theology." Hollenbach, "Public Theology in America," 303.

[236] Ibid., 290–303.

an understanding of the mission of the church coherent with the theological method proposed.

### *i. Pluralism*

Hollenbach's starting point is common to many other contemporary American thinkers: pluralism as the main trait of our present society.[237] However, his view has its own particularity to defend, in opposition to most of these thinkers, namely that we can establish a common good in our plural society without necessarily imposing some kind of tyranny. This common understanding of pluralism is the one that seeks to banish religions from public life.

Hollenbach claims that Vatican II is a new stage in the church's life. It represents the acceptance by the church of the fact of pluralism in the modern world. This acceptance and the interpretation it makes of the sense of pluralism, allows it to intervene in society without imposing its own vision of reality. Moreover, Hollenbach asserts that this understanding of pluralism was already present in the theological tradition of the church, as we can see in the examples of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas' thought.[238] Both of these authors distinguished between the eschatological good of humans and the historical common good of human societies, which is always limited.

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[237] "People today are increasingly aware that they have many different kinds of neighbors, both nearby and faraway. And these neighbors have many ideas about what a good life is. The reality of pluralism impinges on people daily as they rub shoulders at their workplace with those who have different religious beliefs and cultural traditions, and whose race or ethnicity is different from their own." Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 17; cf. Ibid., 19.

[238] Cf. Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 120ff.

The retrieving of the role of pluralism in the tradition of the church as it resurfaces in Vatican II, allows Hollenbach to present a Catholic social model for our contemporary pluralistic society: the community of freedom. In his view, the freedom of the individual is not in opposition with solidarity within the different social communities and with establishing a common good.[239] The freedom of the individual in fact requires these more communitarian elements. The understanding of society as a community of freedom supposes a society which is shaped by the individuals through their participation in small communities beyond the state. The church is one of these communities. It has thus an important role to play in society, helping to build the shared common good.

### *ii. The Method*

Acknowledging the role of pluralism and its theological interpretation leads Hollenbach to coin some theoretical terms which could help to mediate the Christian vision of the human being in a pluralistic society without denying such pluralism or the faith-based view. The first inspiration for this task is the ethical vision that Hollenbach believes is present in the documents of the Council – basically in *Gaudium et Spes* and in *Dignitatis Humanae.* Hollenbach calls this vision a dialogic universalism.[240] For him, at the Council a deeper understanding of the influence of cultural and religious traditions upon reason

[239] Cf. Ibid., 113ff; David Hollenbach, "Afterword: a Community of Freedom," in *Catholicism and Liberalism: Contributions to American Public Philosophy*, ed. R. Bruce Douglass and David Hollenbach (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 323–343; Hollenbach, *The Global Face of Public Faith*, 142.

[240] The concept was already present in Hollenbach, *Claims in Conflict*, 113ff; Cf. also David Hollenbach, "Commentary on Gaudium et Spes," in *Modern Catholic Social Thinking: Commentary and Interpretations*, ed. Kenneth R. Himes et al. (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 278.

surfaces. This is reflected in the Council's use of the term culture and it ventures to acknowledge real limits to the capacity of human reason. This view of reason supposes the need of dialogue between the different traditions in order to acquire a more complete knowledge of the human being's good.

Hollenbach extends this idea of a dialogical universalism beyond the ethical domain into his view of society. He proposes, thus, an attitude of intellectual solidarity inside society in opposition to the intolerance present in contemporary political liberalism.[241] He also extends this dialogical universalism to the field of fundamental theology in his use of Tracy's paradigm of the critical correlation.[242] Finally, for Hollenbach the synthetic reasoning that he discovers in John Courtney Murray's arguments is an expression of this critical correlation, although it is antecedent in history.[243]

In the end, Hollenbach is trying to integrate in his work the capacity to speak to every human being, believer or non-believer, about the good life without renouncing the Christian identity of the message. This is expressed in his understanding of Catholic social ethics as a

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[241] Cf. Hollenbach, *The Global Face of Public Faith*, 10ff.

[242] Hollenbach, "Fundamental Theology and the Christian Moral Life."

[243] "Murray further maintained that the council's approach to religious freedom was a synthesis of the four levels of analysis made possible by the historical experience of the church in its engagement with the world… Synthetic reasoning proceeds by way of dialectic and analogy. It discovers correlations and similarities between different spheres of thinking and action. It depends on imagination, not simply the logic of ratiocination. It is therefore a persuasive rather than deductive enterprise, more like the rationality of classical rhetoric than logic or mathematics. And to be persuasive it must be rooted in experience, history, and culture. It is in fact a form of prudence or practical wisdom – a sense of fitting." Hollenbach, *Justice, Peace, and Human Rights*, 12.

humanism under the sign of the cross.[244] The term humanism would reflect the universality of the ethical message. This message would lie ultimately in the capacity to feel compassion for all human suffering. This would be the link with ultimate specific Christian insight: the cross as the symbol of God's mercy for every human suffering.

### *iii. The Mission of the Church*

The empirical study of society confirms Hollenbach's thesis about the role of religions in society. When religion is understood properly, it contributes to the building up and the welfare of a democratic society because it fosters healthy public participation.[245] Hollenbach understands this fact at the level of political philosophy. He affirms, thus, that the liberal vision of authors such as John Rawls does not offer us a solid enough base for the building of democracy. In his view, these views separate the public sphere, dominated by the state and the market, from the private sphere. These views deny then the existence of a common good. Hollenbach presents as a superior alternative, the position of Catholic social thought. This view sees no separation between public and private life. It sees public life as composed not only of the state and the market but also of the institutions of civil society. For Hollenbach, in contemporary plural societies we can still achieve a common good of the different citizens through the disposition of intellectual solidarity.[246] To intervene in the elaboration of this common good, the individuals should belong to smaller

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[244] Cf. Hollenbach, *The Global Face of Public Faith*, 54ff.

[245] Cf. Ibid., 174ff.

[246] Cf. Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 154ff.

communities, whose members are united by bonds of solidarity. These smaller communities are the means to give voice to the individuals in society. Among these smaller communities we find the church. It contributes to public life not only with a particular vision, but with a huge symbolic and imaginative richness which helps people face the problems of our societies.[247] The role of the churches is then located mainly in the cultural sphere of society; it contributes to the debate over ideas and values. However, it can extend itself to the political life if necessary, always with a disposition of intellectual solidarity.[248]

The concrete action of the church, as a community inside society, presumes to take concrete options and to execute actions by individuals and by the institution in subjects which will be many times ambiguous. This fact demands from the church a reading of social reality which would be complex and in constant dialogue with social sciences. Faith provides us with an especial light and with a collective sacramental imagination. These elements allow us to read the social reality in a deeper way and give orientation to the common action.[249] Moreover, the Holy Spirit gives the Christian the virtue of fortitude with which he can persevere in the efforts for justice in our modern societies. This is especially necessary due to how the complexity of our societies wears us down and confuses us.[250] It is the task of bishops, priests and other ministers to help the community to develop a prudential synthesis of faith's light and the data coming from social analysis. This synthesis

[247] Cf. Ibid., 165; Hollenbach, *The Global Face of Public Faith*, 118ff.

[248] Cf. Hollenbach, *The Global Face of Public Faith*, 188–189.

[249] Cf. Hollenbach, *Justice, Peace, and Human Rights*, 181ff.

[250] Cf. Ibid., 216ff.

will allow the faithful to understand the more complex social environment in which the church has to fulfill its mission today.[251]

*b) JOHN COLEMAN*

John Coleman uses the term "strategic theology" as the definition of what he is seeking in his work. The term comes from John C. Bennet who affirms that "all theologies are to some extent strategic theologies. They give emphasis to the questions of a particular time and place and they seek to counteract what are believed to be the errors that are most tempting at the time."[252] For Coleman, then, a strategic theology like the one he wants to develop is one which takes into account the limits and possibilities of its context. Coleman describes this task of a strategic theology following Tracy's paradigm and presents the task of a strategic theology as a correlation between the Christian symbol and the particular social situation on which the theologian reflects. In Coleman's words "theology as a living enterprise demands interpretive reconstruction of the received symbols of the tradition to contextual questions arising from very particular places, times and problems."[253] Coleman supports this statement quoting Tracy's *Blessed Rage for Order*.

Coherently with this understanding of theology, John Coleman considers that political and liberation theology, in spite of their great contribution to the church's social mission and self-understanding, are not good theologies for the U.S. because they do not

[251] Cf. Ibid., 203.

[252] Cf. John C. Bennett, *The Radical Imperative: From Theology to Social Ethics* (Philadelphia: Westmister Press, 1975), 127; as quoted in Coleman, *An American Strategic Theology*, 131.

[253] Coleman, *An American Strategic Theology*, 131.

answer the particular challenges and possibilities of the U.S. context. Coleman mentions two main features of the American theological context that render it different from Europe and Latin America: a long history of social theology that takes into account political analysis and moral evaluation (Rauschenbusch, Reinhold Niebuhr, John Ryan, John Courtney Murray, *inter alia*); and a very particular set of political institutions in terms of separation of church and state and religious pluralism that create a particularly favorable climate for the church's action in society.[254]

Coleman sees the Church's social mission as advancing on two different levels. In doing this he seems inspired by Paul Ramsey and he seems to reflect the style of social mission that Paul VI proposed in his 1971 apostolic letter *Octogesima Adveniens*.[255] The first level includes the official statements of the Church. This should, at the same time, honor the social role of the Church and its freedom to speak in society and respect the autonomy of secular spheres.[256] Coleman proposes to formulate these statements in the form of what Paul Ramsey calls middle axioms, and John Courtney Murray calls norms of discernment. These middle axioms are, in Coleman's words, "directives, inviting toward decision and action. They are more concrete than general principles… they also rely on experience and enlightenment through the Spirit."[257] To respect the freedom of conscience of the Christian, the middle axioms should be made on the basis only of Christian warrants;

[254] Cf. Ibid., 66.

[255] Cf. Ibid., 27.

[256] Cf. Ibid.

[257] Ibid., 28.

they should be considered as reformable although they have to be binding in some way for Catholics, they should honor the plurality of situation in which the Christians are inserted; they should suppose a strategic choice in function of clear priorities; and they should respect the fact that the mission of the Church is wider than its social dimension.[258] This way of speaking of public social issues by the official Catholic Church avoids committing the authority of the Church in overly concrete issues that are disputable.

A second level of the social mission of the Church is the one of para-ecclesial groups. These particular groups of church members are the expression of the teaching office of the church, which extends itself to the whole of the people of god, not only to the hierarchy.[259] These groups, inspired by the middle axioms proposed by the Church hierarchy, can make particular commitments in particular fields following prudential judgments regarding the situation. In doing this they do not engage the whole Church in their choice. They thus have a wider freedom to make options. The corporate church should give them freedom to discern the signs of the time and make these options. With their choices and engagements, these groups are offering a witness for the whole Church and can help the Church to take positions later on these issues.[260]

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[258] Cf. Ibid., 28–30.

[259] Cf. Ibid., 31; this stress on the teaching office of the whole of the Church, hierarchy and laity, is a main theme in Coleman's thought. In another essay of the book he affirms: "Nevertheless, the appropriate voice for enunciating a theology of culture and Maritain's concrete historical ideal is not hierarchical but lay. The laity uniquely have experience in the shifting realities of the cultural worlds of marriage, family, neighborhood, secular work and politics. A compelling concrete ideal can only grow out of such lived experience and prudential discerning choices of the appropriately Christian response to definite contexts." Ibid., 39.

[260] Cf. Coleman, *An American Strategic Theology*, 32–33.

Coleman concretizes this view by proposing a particular method for developing his American strategic theology; he proposes the method of the pastoral circle as exposed by Joe Holland and Peter Henriot.[261] This method invites us to develop theological reflection in four steps: experience, social analysis, theological reflection and pastoral planning.[262] Because it is understood as a circle, the four steps are not isolated from each other but enlighten each other reciprocally; pastoral planning generates new experiences that start the circle again.[263] Experience is understood as the experiential dimension of life, the people and events we encounter and it is already colored by faith.[264] Social analysis shouldn't be seen as a univocal method of grasping reality but as a set of different resources that, rightly interpreted and enlightened by faith, could help us understand better our experiences.[265] Theological reflection should be nourished by Scripture, Catholic social teaching and the Catholic tradition, and it should lead us to give responses to reality in the form of concrete pastoral planning.[266]

In the last essay of his book, Coleman proposes some theses in order to develop this American strategic theology that he believes is the heir of such great figures of American

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[261] Cf. Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice* (Washington D.C.: Center of Concern, 1980), 3–12.

[262] Cf. Coleman, *An American Strategic Theology*, 276.

[263] Cf. Ibid., 283.

[264] Cf. Ibid., 276–278.

[265] Cf. Ibid., 278–282.

[266] Cf. Ibid., 282–283.

theology as Orestes Brownson, John A. Ryan, and John Courtney Murray.[267] These theses reflect a theology that springs from the social mission of the Church in the form of education, advocacy and contact with the poor, a theology that acknowledges that it is directed to a wealthy social context and so invites to relinquishment, a theology that should balance messianic and eschatological elements with the consciousness of being instruments of God's providence in our decisions, a theology based on two main American symbols, freedom and fairness, a theology that will retrieve the values of the American context without ignoring its shadows, a theology that honors the autonomy of politics as a wisdom necessary for the wellbeing of the community, and a theology that recognizes its tentativeness and reformability.[268] All these elements of Coleman's project draw the image of a theology that springs from a rigorous sociological approach to his context.[269] This theology receives the good insights of political and liberation theology, developing Vatican II insights on the role of theology in politics, but, because it seeks to answer to the concrete American social context, maintains distance from these theologies in order to respond to the American reality. Coleman's theology rejects liberation theology's confidence in Marxism[270] as well as its focus exclusively on the life and struggles of the poor, which

[267] Cf. the essay "Vision and praxis in American Catholic theology" in Ibid., 71–107.

[268] Cf. Ibid., 282–294.

[269] In the initial essay of the book Coleman gives some theological warrants to his work that could explain this. In this essay he affirms: "The shadow of this law of concrete temporal incarnation means that Church people are often largely defined by their social location and place in history." Cf. Ibid., 14.

[270] We should take into account that Coleman's book is from 1982, when Marxism was widely present in liberation theology. The events of 1989 have obliged everyone to reconsider the approach to Marxism in a more critical way.

should be broadened when addressing a wealthy and developed society like the one of the U.S.[271] Coleman's project for American theology also breaks with Metz's political theology, abandoning Metz's negative and critical approach to society (based on the negative dialectics of the Frankfurt school) to affirm the need for politics as an autonomous discipline, in order to embody God's providence through human efforts.[272] American theology should respect this autonomy and the necessary ambiguity of any political option dialoguing with it through the development of a social ethic that comprehends a particular theory of justice.

*c) MICHAEL AND KENNETH HIMES*

Michael and Kenneth Himes propose a clear position in terms of public theology in their book *Fullness of Faith.* They affirm that they locate themselves on the path opened by Martin Marty with his idea of a public church, as a community with a social mission based on respect for other institutions, assumption of responsibility for the wellbeing of the society and commitment to work for the common good with other institutions.[273] This framework helps address the main concern of the authors: the

[271] Cf. Coleman, *An American Strategic Theology*, 285–286.

[272] Cf. Ibid., 287; Coleman's view on politics reflects his theoretical starting point as expressed in the first essay of his book: "The Church is called to discern and proclaim the action of God wherever he is at work. But God must clearly be at work in those institutional spheres which most affect the lives of people and determine the shape of history: politics and economics." Cf. Ibid., 21.

[273] Cf. Himes and Himes, *Fullness of Faith*, 2.

privatization of religion.[274] In this line, the Himes brothers want to develop a public theology as, in their words, "a manner of theological reflection which examines the resources latent within the Christian tradition for understanding the church's public role."[275]

To develop this public theology in a Catholic context, the Himes brothers acknowledge the legacy of John Courtney Murray and his view of a public philosophy,[276] but, following the insights expressed in the symposium on Murray published in *Theological Studies* in 1979 by David Hollenbach,[277] they suggest going beyond Murray's insights, introducing religious symbols and insights in the discourse. To advance in this direction, they draw from David Tracy's paradigm of critical correlation in his *The Analogical Imagination.*[278] They propose, thus, a public theology which consists in interpreting the religious and Christian classics – understood as Tracy does – in a way that its truth claim is presented without forcing the public to assent to the totality of the beliefs.[279] Ultimately, for the Himes brothers, public theology supposes a particular view of the church-society relationship, and not just church-state. In their words, "public theology is one of the ways

[274] "The public church illustrates a possible response by believers to a phenomenon which has bedeviled modern Christianity –privatization, the assumption that religion may be an important dimension of people's lives without having any impact on society." Ibid., 2.

[275] Ibid., 4.

[276] Cf. Ibid., 8–12.

[277] Cf. Hollenbach, "Theology and Philosophy in Public: a Symposium on John Courtney Murray."

[278] Cf. Himes and Himes, *Fullness of Faith*, 15–19.

[279] "The public theologian searches for a way to make truth claims which can be tested by the public without the public having to assent to everything that the theologian believes… Religious classics need be no less public in their effects than other classics despite their particularistic origins." Ibid., 19.

that religious institutions can contribute to societal existence."[280] This contribution of the Church to society is done in a way that is respectful regarding religious freedom, in the U.S. case, with the First Amendment of the Constitution.

But the authors acknowledge the need for a middle ground between theology and society in order to respect the autonomy of the secular and avoid a fundamentalist approach to social issues. This middle ground is the field of social ethics, which informs the Scriptural principles in order to apply them to the reality of the society. That is why the Himes brothers describe their method in public theology as "an articulation of the Roman Catholic tradition's worldview or background theory which informs a social ethics and consequent public policy choices."[281] When making these choices explicit, the authors hasten to distance themselves from the work of John Milbank, whose *Theology and Social Theory* they quote. In opposition to Milbank's negative view of social science and his insistence upon theological primacy, the Himes brothers propose a theology which is respectful of social sciences' autonomy and at the same time able to contribute to the reform of our public life.[282] From this theoretical starting point the authors address six different contemporary social issues and enlighten them through different religious symbols.

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[280] Ibid., 20.

[281] Ibid., 23.

[282] "Milbank suggests that theology has difficulty with modern social theory, for the latter relies on a story of violence for its fundamental orientation… This book demonstrates that the Catholic theological tradition tells a story of peace. Perhaps if we and others tell the story well, the significance of theology for reforming our public life will be made evident." Ibid., 27.

First, the Himes brothers affirm that the liberal view on the role of self-interest in society, which follows particularly Hobbes and Adam Smith, is based upon a Protestant understanding of original sin which considers that the fall has fully destroyed the goodness of human nature; therefore altruism cannot be a realistic motivation in social issues.[283] The Catholic understanding of theological anthropology affirms that human nature has not lost its essential goodness after the fall, so humans are still capable of generous acts. Society, in the Catholic view, should give space to express the social dimension of humans and its capacity for self-giving.[284] In the Catholic social tradition this communitarian view of society has been expressed through the concept of common good as it is understood today, including the principles of freedom, equality and participation.[285]

Second, the authors then proceed to explain the Catholic approach to human rights from the understanding of the Trinity. The concept of person is ultimately a development of the Trinitarian dogma. Therefore, seeing the persons of the Trinity as essentially self-giving – they become more fully the person they are the more they enter into relationship – means that humans have their individuality, which is stressed by the recognition of human rights. But they are also social, and so human rights should be understood as integrated in a social context; there are human rights and human duties towards the other members of the community. In conclusion for the authors: "human rights are moral claims to some good

[283] Cf. Ibid., 29–32.

[284] Cf. Ibid., 33–34.

[285] Cf. Ibid., 39ff.

which can be provided and which should be provided in light of the moral idea of establishing communities which can mirror the Trinitarian life of self-giving."[286]

Third, from the Catholic understanding of the relationship between nature and grace, the Himes brothers want to support the initiative of developing a consistent ethics of life that gathers all the different issues related to life in modern societies. The Catholic understanding of nature and grace as basically complementary and harmonically related allows the Church to break the distinction between sacred and profane and discover the reality as sacramental – grace ultimately helps things to become fully what they already are. This understanding allows the Catholic to see human life as sacred in all its dimensions, even in its political and economic ones, and to try to intervene to defend it. The project of a consistent ethics of life would give shape to that sacramental understanding of reality and of human life.

Fourth, to enlighten the present efforts to develop an environmental ethics, the Himes brothers read the stories of creation as a call to companionship that reaches non-human creation. This fact, united to the Catholic sacramental view of reality, makes the care of humans for creation more than just stewardship, but rather a matter of respecting the value of God's creation and establishing the proper relationship with it.

Fifth, the authors, suggest a way to understand patriotism from the doctrine of the Incarnation. The Incarnation of the Son of God and the way that he lived in a particular culture and a particular society tell us that universal values should be experienced and lived sometime, somewhere. This gives legitimacy to patriotism and to loyalty to the nation-state

[286] Ibid., 73.

as "formative communities capable of inducing loyalty, if we understand that communities include groups of people who are socially interdependent, who share certain practices that define the group, and who participate in the decision-making of the group."[287] However this loyalty to the community where we live cannot become idolatry, and therefore, it should be understood always as relative. When it comes in conflict with other universal values such as human rights, this loyalty to the nation-state should be put aside.

Finally, the authors present a general overview of social life, which today is marked by interdependence and globalization, through the lens of the doctrine of the communion of saints. This doctrine sees all Christians, regardless of space and time, as united in Christ, forming one same body. This understanding can enlighten our view of society and global interdependence, as based not on a mere social contract but on solidarity. Solidarity is more than mere interdependence, it is a virtue, which requires, in the Himes' words, "conversion of mind, heart and will."[288] Solidarity should be "a conscious choice of people who seek ways of improving the good of all, if a commitment to the common good demands that some place limits on their own desires or stated interests that should be done."[289] The application of this virtue of solidarity to actual societies is expressed by the authors' concept of a politics of generativity, which means a politics which "seeks to create a society which meets the duties outlined under the heading of charity, justice and solidarity. People

[287] Ibid., 146.

[288] Ibid., 173.

[289] Ibid.

are called upon to act not out of self-interest but concern for the other."[290] This concept should help us understand what the real human development of a society is.

## 5. A PUBLIC THEOLOGY ARGUMENT

Because of the abstract character of our reflections up to now, it would be fair to pose the question: how do we actually do public theology? In the interest of clarity, I present a concrete example of the public theology argument. Harold Breitenberg distinguishes three main types of works in the field of public theology: (1) description of theologians, past or present, as public theologians, (2) reflection about what public theology is and how to carry it out, and (3) theologically grounded interpretations that serve as guidance for particular circumstances and policies, what he calls constructive public theology.[291] To anticipate the objection that public theology too often remains vague and abstract, more concerned with methods than problems and their solutions,[292] I will present an example of constructive public theology in order to give flesh to our overview of the topic.

Consider, then, the debate on war and peace, and particularly the debate on the use of nuclear weapons. The way this debate has developed in the U.S. is particularly useful

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[290] Ibid., 181.

[291] Cf. Breitenberg, "To tell the truth: Will the real public theology please stand up?" 63–64.

[292] "For example, James Gustafson wrote that one of the things at the University of Chicago Divinity School with which he dissented was the effort to forge a theory about public theology. Instead, he pointed to the U.S. Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter on war and peace as a document produced by the church that was taken 'very seriously by some important persons in public life,' without in the process intentionally attending to questions about how to forge such a theory." Ibid., 68.

when reflecting on the best way to integrate Christian symbols in relevant arguments. Kristin Heyer sees the debate about the use of force as the main debate where we can identify the major theological approaches to the social aspects of Christian faith. She calls these approaches "an approach of purity" and "an approach of compromise."[293]

We will take then the argument on the morality of the use of nuclear weapons as exposed in David Hollenbach's *Nuclear Ethics: A Christian Moral Argument*. The book presents Hollenbach's position on the issue which has close resemblance with the U.S bishops' document *The Challenge of Peace*.[294] This allows us to see the volume as a fully developed argument of a theologian who reflects theologically in public.

From the very beginning of his book, Hollenbach asserts his desire to develop a more theological argument of the issue of war and peace in the nuclear age.[295] Hollenbach begins by showing how the plurality of present Catholic positions toward war and peace – pacifism and just war theory – are both well rooted in the history of the church.[296] If

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[293] Cf. Heyer, *Prophetic & Public*, 85.

[294] "The single most important contribution by the churches to the contemporary discussion of United States nuclear policy has been that of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops Ad Hoc Committee on War and Peace. The final version of the Committee's pastoral letter on this subject is expected to be voted on and issued sometime in 1983. In order to avoid entering into arguments which could easily be irrelevant when the final version of the letter is approved, it seemed best to put forward my views on their own merits." Hollenbach, *Nuclear Ethics*, 3.

[295] "The reality of pluralism on the level of ethics is compelling the Church to a consideration of the relation between faith in Jesus Christ and the problem of war and violence. In other words, the new state of the question calls for a development of a properly theological approach to the ethics of war and peace in the nuclear age." Ibid., 8.

[296] Cf. Ibid., 7.

pacifism was the first option of the early church as an expression of gospel values, the normalization of the presence of Christianity into society after Constantine, especially the entry of Christian into government, demanded from the Church a more nuanced understanding of the ethics of war and peace; this helped the development of the just war theory.[297] However, we shouldn't understand both positions simply as opposed, but rather as complementary; in fact, both positions share a common starting point: war is never good, nonviolence is the Christian norm and the use of force can only be an exception.[298] The difference is that, for pacifism, the rejection of violence is absolute and for the just war theory it is a conditional obligation that can have exceptions in some cases.[299]

The difference between both positions is the understanding they have of the relationship between peace and justice. For pacifism non-violence is the only response to injustice in order to achieve peace; while just war theory, founded in historical and political experience, considers that in some circumstances we can pursue justice even by force over peace, as a way to achieve a lasting peace.[300] We can identify two different understandings of the same theological insight which is at the core of both ethical positions: the Paschal mystery embodies the struggle between God's kingdom and the sin of the world. Although some struggle and conflict is necessary in order for the Kingdom to come, Christ's resurrection is already the inauguration of this kingdom where justice will reign and there

[297] Cf. Ibid., 8ff.

[298] Cf. Ibid., 15.

[299] Cf. Ibid., 16.

[300] Cf. Ibid., 22–23.

will be no more violence.[301] Pacifism and just war theory reflect two sides of this Paschal Mystery, while pacifism reflects the side of the cross and the suffering servant who helps to bring the kingdom, just war theory reflects the side of the resurrection and the victory of Christ's justice over sin. This plurality of position is necessary in order to represent the whole of the Christian mystery.[302] Both ethical positions are valid and defendable; the actual stance taken by the individual Christian depends on his personal vocation and his level of responsibility in political decisions.[303]

This plurality of positions in Christian ethics toward war and peace is not without limits; the conditions of the just war theory – what is traditionally called *ius ad bellum* and *ius in bello* – set a limit to the exceptions to the rejection of violence we can accept. They give us the criteria to judge the particular policies we want to implement.[304] Hollenbach applies these criteria to the use of nuclear weapons in the NATO-Warsaw Pact relationships of that time and concludes that, because of the high risk of uncontrolled nuclear escalation and its consequences as foreseen by prudential judgment, no use of nuclear weapons is morally acceptable.[305] In this particular issue pacifism and just war theory converge upon the same conclusion.

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[301] Cf. Ibid., 29.

[302] Cf. Ibid., 30–31.

[303] Cf. Ibid., 33.

[304] Cf. Ibid., 37.

[305] Cf. Ibid., 61–62.

Where both positions diverge is in suggesting how to actually avoid the use of nuclear weapons, the notion of deterrence. While pacifism will promote the rejection of any threat of use of nuclear weapons as a way to deter the enemy from using them, an approach from just war theory which takes into account political wisdom and experience will consider valid a deterrence policy when it fulfills two conditions: that it reduces the risk of nuclear war and that it moves in the direction of nuclear disarmament.[306] The church exposing this political analysis helps society to see how political practical reasoning is also linked with morality.[307]

In summary, we see in this example of a public theology argument about war and peace how a public theologian faces a main social issue of his time: the use of nuclear weapons, and he does so in a broader theoretical framework than a purely ethical one. He introduces the theological problematic at the root of disagreements on this topic and he tries to elaborate a synthesis of the different levels of the problem: theological, ethical and prudential.

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After a general presentation of the movement of public theology we have approached its Catholic variant. When doing so, we have first exposed the overarching theoretical paradigm of Catholic public theology – David Tracy's correlational model – and we have then studied the work of four major U.S. Catholic public theologians. We have

[306] Cf. Ibid., 82.

[307] Cf. Ibid., 84–85.

called them Catholic social theorists following Tracy's suggestion, because they develop a more practical and concrete approach to social issues. We have also seen an example of how public theology unfolds a theological argument following its insights on the use of religious symbols and narratives. All this gives us an accurate image of what it means to bring theology into public life. We will now try to draw some general conclusions from the general overview of public theology we have presented up to now. These conclusions will help us in our effort to bring theology into public life in the Spanish context.

## IV. WHAT CAN WE SAY ABOUT PUBLIC THEOLOGY?

### 1. DEFINITION

In spite of the enormous variety of versions which exist in the field, Breitenberg tries to present a definition of public theology in the following terms,

> "Public theology is thus theologically informed public discourse about public issues, addressed to the church, synagogue, mosque, temple, or other religious body; as well as the larger public or publics, argued in ways that can be evaluated and judged by publicly available warrants and criteria… Expressed in terms of the Christian tradition, public theology intends to provide theologically informed interpretations of and guidance for individuals, faith communities, and the institutions and interactions of civil society, in ways that are understandable, assessable, and possibly convincing to those inside the church and those outside as well."[308]

Therefore, a public theology would be a theological statement about some social issue addressed to the whole society in terms that can be understood by all societal actors. As already noted, one cannot consider public theology as a unified school of theology or even

[308] Breitenberg, "To tell the truth: Will the real public theology please stand up?" 66.

a method. It is more an emphasis or accent the author stresses when doing theology.[309] Based on this idea, and considering that Breitenbert here speaks of public theology as a discourse, I propose to consider public theology more a style of theology in the sense that O'Malley identifies a particular style in the Second Vatican Council as the representation of its spirit.[310] Following O'Malley's understanding, to consider public theology as a style, is not only a literary issue; to write in a particular style supposes a particular understanding of one's identity as well as of one's relationship with the world.[311]

However, as seen above, David Tracy has developed a particular method of bringing theology into public where publicness becomes a main characteristic of the essence of theology itself.[312] Moreover, most of U.S. Catholic theologians trying to develop a theology addressed to their plural society have taken this method as an inspiration for their work. Therefore, I identify in this set of authors around the critical-correlational

[309] Gaspar Martínez speaks of public theology as an effort, an ongoing enterprise. Cf. Martinez, *Confronting the Mystery of God: Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies*, 170.

[310] "'Spirit' here meant an overriding vision that transcended the particulars of the documents and had to be taken into account in interpreting the council. The vagueness of 'spirit' is brought down to earth and made verifiable when we pay attention to the style of the council, to its unique literary form and vocabulary; and draw their implications." O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, 52.

[311] "Taken together, moreover, they constitute a style of discourse that reveals the inner values of the person speaking… The council is speaking for the church and thus manifests what it holds to be the church's inner reality. It thereby indicates how the church will, ideally, behave and 'do business.' The council is speaking about the very identity of the church. It teaches by means of its style." Ibid., 49.

[312] "Theology, by the very nature of the kind of fundamental existential questions it asks and because of the nature of the reality of God upon which theology reflects, must develop public, not private, criteria and discourse." Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, xi.

paradigm an actual proposal of a method for a public theology. Because it is a sound and valuable position I will take it as a reference point for my work in this dissertation.

## 2. OVERLAPS OF PUBLIC THEOLOGY

When trying to understand what public theology is, it is helpful to recognize the many coincidences that this style of theology has with other theological currents. These efforts to set the limits of what a theology done in public may be, are helpful to grasp its ultimate meaning.

### *a) PUBLIC THEOLOGY AND PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY*

A first overlap is the one that exists between the terms public philosophy and public theology. We already glimpsed certain aspects of this dynamic when presenting the figure of John Courtney Murray, who claimed to be doing explicitly a public philosophy. Regarding this distinction Breitenberg says,

> Public philosophy and public theology share certain similarities, but public theology relies on and stresses the public significance of particular religious texts, beliefs, communities, practices, traditions, and influences in ways public philosophy does not. Such dependence on religion distinguishes public theology from public philosophy. Public philosophy also tends to focus primarily and more narrowly on political aspects of a society – on ways in which civil institutions, values, and patterns incorporate political theories and interests. Public theology may interact with public philosophy but, unlike the latter, public theology is based in part on understanding of deity and the relationship of that deity to human society.[313]

John Courtney Murray, the main representative of the idea of a public philosophy, tried to develop his public philosophy based on the framework of natural law. It is thus

[313] Breitenberg, "To tell the truth: Will the real public theology please stand up?," 60.

important to make some points on the relationship between what the public theologians are seeking in their work and natural law theory.

When addressing the role of natural law in Murray's public philosophy and the changes that a public theology would suppose for this, Julio Martínez introduces the category of mediation, a major category in Catholic theology. Mediation means that God's plans for humans are not given primarily in a direct way, but indirectly through other human means such as reason.[314] When reflecting on Murray's work and the development of public theology Martínez distinguishes two types of mediation: public philosophy which mediates among the different cosmovisions, languages and traditions present in a society; and public theology which mediates between the common experience of the people and the symbolic richness of the particular traditions.[315]

Public philosophy uses reason as the main mediation to organize the public affairs of a society; in the Catholic tradition natural law has been the usual expression of this mediation through reason. This fact does not deny the role of faith and theology which could very well inspire our proposition, but it demands to build a discourse that could be accountable to reason by any member of any religious denomination.[316] The emphasis that

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[314] "La mediación pone de manifiesto que los planes divinos no anulan nunca el proceso de razonamiento humano, ni sustituyen la capacidad de razón humana, sino que precisamente en y a través de ella – en su reflexión sobre la existencia—llegamos a conocer lo que Dios espera de los hombres." Martínez, *"Consenso público" y moral social*, 499.

[315] Cf. Ibid., 501.

[316] "Frente a la 'ética bíblica' de raigambre protestante, el católico opta por una 'ética racional,' por cuanto cree en la mediación: mediación es tanto el instrumento o canal (medio) de traducir la fuerza de 'la religión' a la moral pública, como el lugar común o punto de encuentro que viene de las premisas compartidas. La filosofía pública es el canal racional de la mediación, eso significa que es la razón, no la ética bíblica o

we see in many authors around public theology regarding the idea of the intelligibility of the arguments for the wider society helps us see natural law, and any other rational framework, as the means to provide that intelligibility to the theological argument, and so to acknowledge continuity between public theology and public philosophy.[317]

But Martínez sees human rationality as larger than the rationality used in the construction of natural law. Human rationality includes other dimensions, such as the symbolic one. This allows the religious symbol to become another element in the public reasoning.[318] Therefore a public theology not only can give us the foundations of the public philosophy arguments, it can be the mediation to bring the dynamism proper to the religious symbol to public life.[319]

The present situation of pluralism in modern societies tells us that, better than looking for a mediation that is above and apart from the different traditions represented within a given society, like the natural law, it could be more useful to create a framework of dialogue between these different traditions in which a conversation may occur in order to

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teológica o cualquier otro concepto religioso específico, la fuente directiva de los asuntos públicos de la sociedad." Ibid., 500.

[317] Breitenberg's definition of public theology, as we have noted above, expresses very well this need of intelligibility and the continuity with public philosophy. Cf. Breitenberg, "To tell the truth: Will the real public theology please stand up?" 55.

[318] "La mediación es posible porque el lenguaje simbólico religioso (bíblico-teológico) no pertenece a un reino de la experiencia humana al margen de la racionalidad humana... Los símbolos religiosos tienen un estatuto cognitivo y una distinción probada para su utilización en la comunicación pública." Martínez, *"Consenso público" y moral social*, 502.

[319] Cf. Ibid.

generate common values in a pluralistic society.[320] This would form part of the agenda of public theology.

Some main contemporary interpretations of natural law, like that of Jean Porter, stress the fact that theology is always influencing our understanding of natural law.[321] These views reinforce the connection between public theology and natural law that I want to assert here. There would not be a public philosophy built on a neutral natural law as such. Our understanding of natural law is already a construction influenced by a particular theology.

*b) Public Theology and Political and Liberation Theology*

Another main overlap is the one that exists between public theology, as a theology that speaks to the public sphere, and political and liberation theologies. We have already seen how public theology itself springs from the inspiration that these other movements in

[320] "Sin embargo, lo que actualmente no está tan claro es que la filosofía pública en categorías filosófico racionales sea la más competente mediación entre la riqueza simbólica cristiana y la exigencia común ciudadana. Acaso la mediación necesaria apunta más en el sentido de un espacio o marco común de encuentro dialógico entre las distintas cosmovisiones, más que hablar un lenguaje por encima y al margen de las diferencias (al estilo de la ley natural), se trata de ir alcanzando lugares comunes de significado sobre los que fundar los valores que dan consistencia al consenso público y los criterios morales desde los que se puede hacer discernimiento moral sobre la vida de la comunidad socio-política." Ibid., 503.

[321] "In short, the scholastics construe nature, reason, and Scripture as three mutually interpreting sources for moral norms... The scholastics begin with assumptions about nature and the moral order that are derived from many sources, including both Scripture and traditions of philosophical reflection... Because the scholastics concept of the natural law is both justified and developed on the basis of a particular reading of Scripture, we may fairly describe it as a scriptural concept, although it also reflects its classical and more narrowly philosophical antecedents." Jean Porter, *Natural and Divine Law: Reclaiming the Tradition for Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 140; Cf. also ibid., 293 and 303.

theology produced in the U.S.[322] The reason for this similarity is that there is a common concern at the bottom of these three theological movements: the engagement of theology with social realities. In the Catholic context this concern was already received and fostered by the Second Vatican Council.[323] Gaspar Martínez in his book *Confronting the Mystery of God* will identify a common basis for the liberation, political and public theologies in Rahner's thought as a movement of *exitus-reditus* from God to society and back to God. [324]

It is not my goal here to make a comparative study of these theological movements, which would require much greater space. It will suffice to point out their respective lines in order to portray more clearly what public theology is. The three theologies share a common concern: the effects of faith in society. One major difference that separates them is this:

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[322] "The relation between philosophical approaches to social ethics and efforts to address social issues in an explicitly theological way has emerged as one of the central issues in recent discussion of Murray's writings. In part it is due to the heightened awareness of the political dimension of the whole theological enterprise which political and liberation theologies have stimulated." Hollenbach, "Theology and Philosophy in Public: A Symposium on John Courtney Murray's Unfinished Agenda," 700–701.

[323] "This Council exhorts Christians, as citizens of two cities, to strive to discharge their earthly duties conscientiously and in response to the gospel spirit. They are mistaken who, knowing that we have here no abiding city but seek one which is to come, think that they may therefore shirk their earthly responsibilities." "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern Word-*Gaudium et Spes*", accessed June 1, 2011, para. 43, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

[324] "The central thesis of this work can be summarized as follows: the three models of post-Rahnerian theology follow the double movement of *exitus-reditus* in relation to Rahner's theology. They exit transcendentally and move to history and society in order to place the discussion on God not at the preemptive level of the transcendental analysis of the conditions of possibility of knowing and being but at the level of the conditions of history and the experiences of non-identity found in that history. Having done that, the three theologies retrieve the hiddenness and the incomprehensibility of God, thus coming back in a kind of recapitulatory way, each through its own theological journey and in its own terms, to the mystery of God in which Rahner himself recapitulated his theological enterprise." Martinez, *Confronting the Mystery of God: Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies*, 216.

while political theology and liberation theology address their theology to the church as a call to change its praxis,[325] those whom we call public theologians address their theological arguments to the whole of society in order to participate in the discussion of the pluralistic society as it seeks a more just order. There is then a stronger consciousness of pluralism in society and the need to build in common with other religions and cultures a common life together. They want to be able to say a word on this process that is theologically significant. Therefore the difference is the fact that public theology's goal – to develop a theology that speaks to everyone in a pluralistic society – is not reflected in the other two theologies which address their thought more to the church itself in order to produce a change in its perception and especially in its praxis. This concern for the publicness of theology comes from the experience of pluralism in society and from the consciousness of the threat that the privatization of religion supposes to the integrity of faith.

Another very important difference between a theology done in public and liberation and political theologies is that each of these last two currents proposes a whole new way of doing theology. Public theology represents more of a methodological stance or style in doing theology that can be combined with many different concrete theologies.[326]

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[325] Gustavo Gutiérrez defines theology as a critical reflection on the historical praxis in the light of faith, cf. Gutiérrez, *Teología De La Liberación*, 31; in a similar manner Metz affirms that "if it is not to remain at the level of a pure assertion that is suspected of ideology, theology must be able to define and call upon a praxis in which Christians can break through the complex social, historical and psychological conditions governing history and society. What is needed, then, is a praxis of faith in mystical and political imitation." Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1980), 77.

[326] Cf. Martinez, *Confronting the Mystery of God: Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies*, 170.

### *c) Public Theology and Christian Social Ethics*

A more subtle issue is the difference between a public theology and Christian social ethics. The overlap here is very evident when we think that the four major Catholic authors – apart from Tracy – considered as public theologians whom we have seen all come from the field of Christian social ethics. Tracy calls them Catholic social theorists, as we have already seen.

Breitenberg identifies here a difference of the level of approach and the starting point, although in the results there will be many confluences. Theology starts from theological assertions and sets the main principles for a social ethics. Social ethics will be more focused on the practical issues considered and will then try to illuminate them in the light of those principles.[327] This difference could correspond to the distinction Tracy draws between systematic theology, as the discipline which makes the critical correlations between Revelation and the situation, and practical theology, which uses those correlations and expresses them with the plausibility criteria of the larger society.

## 3. Limits

Breitenberg in his major article on public theology, which we are following closely here, identifies one limit to public theology. This involves a position with which there

[327] "One difference between public theology and social or public ethics, as I understand them, is indicated by the different nouns. Public theology starts with theology and moves to ethics, or as Max Stackhouse claims, 'a public theology will set forth the first principles of social ethics.' Put differently, public theology interprets the actions of persons and groups, as well as their social, political, economic, familial and other institutions, in light of theology. It is descriptive, evaluative, and normative with respect to the broader culture and society, as well as their institutions and interactions, in ways that social and public ethics often are not." Breitenberg, "To tell the truth: Will the real public theology please stand up?" 61.

would be no overlap and which would suppose just the opposite approach to public theology, in his words

> Public theology stands in contrast to those exclusively confessional theologies that do not intentionally and explicitly seek to provide interpretations of and guidance for society's public sectors, institutions, and interactions, as a primary end of the church, as well as theologians who regard sources of insight outside the Christian tradition as either alien or unreliable, and reject the notion that the public and social import of the Christian faith can be communicated to the larger society through some sort of universal or trans-communal language.[328]

Here Breitenberg appears to be targeting the work of authors in the line of Alasdair McIntyre and Stanley Hauerwas,[329] and probably the radical orthodoxy movement as well. These authors could be considered also as those under the umbrella of George Lindbeck's postliberal model.[330] This represents, then, one side of the theological debate that has shaped U.S. theology since the beginning of the 80's, the Tracy-Lindbeck debate.[331] The main difference would be, then, in the desire of public theology to articulate Christian sources with other sources in order to elaborate a discourse which could be intelligible and

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[328] Ibid., 66.

[329] It is enough to consider assertions like the following: "Though much of the book involves a running critique of liberal political and ethical theory, my primary interest is to challenge the church to regain a sense of the significance of the polity that derives from convictions peculiar to Christians. In particular I have tried to show why, if the church is to serve our liberal society or any society, it is crucial for Christians to regain an appropriate sense of separateness from that society." Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethics*, 2.

[330] George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2009 [orig. pub. 1984]).

[331] Cf. Klaus Peter Blaser, *Les Théologies Nord-Américaines* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1995), 113ff.

persuasive to the broader society. The opposite position to public theology would reject such a goal as a tragic compromise that destroys the Christian identity of the message.[332]

However, we should not accept this opposition at face value, for two reasons. First of all, among the authors we have identified as public theologians, Lindbeck's postliberal model is also present as a reference and, sometimes, as an inspiration.[333] Secondly, I highly appreciate Kristin Heyer's efforts to overcome this imposed divide, which she already started to do in her first book *Prophetic and Public.* In her article "How does theology go public? Rethinking the debate between David Tracy and George Lindbeck," she clearly presents David Tracy's model as the most suitable one to face the contemporary challenges of theology.[334] Nevertheless, she acknowledges the necessary critique that postliberal theology supposes,[335] and she identifies a reception of these critics in Tracy's intellectual development from *The Analogical Imagination* to *Plurality and Ambiguity.*[336] Something

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[332] "What distinguishes those engaged in public theology is that they claim to use distinctively Christian sources of insight in dialogue with ones that are in principle available to non-Christians, and that they do so in part to address issues, institutions, and interactions that are of importance to society and its various sectors, through forms of discourse they intend to be, in theory and practice, intelligible and possibly persuasive to most members of society." Breitenberg, "To tell the truth: Will the real public theology please stand up?," 67.

[333] Cf. Cady, *Religion, Theology, and American Public Life*, 59; also cf. Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 152.

[334] "Tracy's most recent models, having incorporated some postmodern insights, ultimately provide a more responsive, dynamic method for attending to the public dimensions of theology today" Heyer, "How Does Theology Go Public? Rethinking the Debate Between David Tracy and George Lindbeck," 326.

[335] "Postliberal emphases on the distinctiveness of the Christian community amidst theology's marginalization well balance Tracy's emphases on dialogue and coherence or apologetics." Ibid., 309.

[336] "Tracy's most recent methods survive postliberal criticism and provide more adequate responses to the challenges posed by postmodernism." Ibid., 308.

similar could be said about how David Hollenbach introduces a reflection on virtue and community identity.[337]

## V. GUIDELINES FOR A PUBLIC THEOLOGY IN SPAIN

Because the scope of this work goes beyond a mere presentation of this movement or style of theology and tries to imagine how to bring it into the Spanish context, it is useful to reflect now on the main points of this theological style that will help us develop a similar approach in a context different from its original one. The first thing to say is that public theology is a broad term which comprehends many different positions and models of approach within a common style or concern and which corresponds to a healthy way of channeling the impetus of Casanova's deprivatization of religion. When approached from a Catholic sensibility, the main concern is the mediation between religious symbols and secular realities. We want to have the base of our argument well enrooted in Christian symbols and narratives, as a way to assure the Christian identity of the church's presence in public as well as its religious inspiration. But at the same time we believe this identity and inspiration can find ways to be conveyed to the wide society, while simultaneously respecting its integrity and being fully intelligible by all men and women. Ultimately we can find a harmonic articulation between Revelation and human reason. This is the approach I want to retain from the whole spectrum of the movement of public theology.

This concern for mediation has been nicely formulated in Tracy's model of theology as a critical correlation between the event of Jesus Christ and the situation. I want to retain

[337] Cf. Hollenbach, *Justice, Peace, and Human Rights* chapters 12 and 14.

David Tracy's model as a main point of reference for how to conduct a theology in public when trying to do it in the Spanish context. However, this model should be complemented and put into practice following more practical approaches closer to social ethics. Particularly, I see the need for a more concrete understanding of the meaning of the term situation and how it is interpreted in Tracy's thought. This requires that we complete Tracy's model with the view of the public theologians I have called Catholic social theorists. We have already seen that there is a certain articulation and complementarity of these two lines in public theology. I will pay attention particularly to Hollenbach's attempt to put public theology into practice, as well as to John Coleman's understanding of the situation as mainly shaped by the geographical and social context of the theologian. The Himes brothers' view supposes, in my opinion, a more purely theological approach, which can be helpful as a constant reminder of the challenging goal we face not to fall too easily into a simple discussion about political philosophy or social sciences. With these tools I will attempt to formulate a similar style or effort for theology in order to go public in the context of contemporary Spain.

A main intuition of the public theology movement which I consider most valuable for the context of my home culture is the consideration that pluralism, in spite of its complexity and ambiguity, could be a positive historical reality. This intuition, which is present in different forms in the authors considered, but which is a basic idea in Tracy's model, is, I believe, the right one to have, if we affirm that we have the virtue of Christian hope when facing our modern societies. It is also a necessary attitude for an approach to theology which stresses the presence of God in all things, as in the Ignatian Spirituality-based

approach I would like to develop. This insight of public theology is particularly helpful in countries like Spain, a society where pluralism has just started to appear and where it produces major concerns. Public theology in that context holds the promise of overcoming the natural fear that social changes produce and allowing us to still announce a good news in the midst of our shifting society.

Much to be commended is the brave defense of faith's publicness that public theology sparks. This is an important contribution that answers the present threat of privatization that secularist readings of history and society suppose for religion. The concern to preserve the integrity of faith defending its social and public implications as a reality that touches the whole of the person's life, has been present in the church for a long time. This concern is also very much present in the Spanish church. The contribution that public theology can make to this effort is to raise this publicness in a way that is particularly fitting for our contemporary western pluralistic societies.

Finally, I would like to draw upon the idea of public theology as a style of theology, a style that supposes an understanding of the church, an understanding of the Church's dialogue partner and of their mutual relationship. This interpretation of public theology allows me to affirm that, ultimately, public theology is not just a literary style for doing theology, but it implies a particular understanding of the church-society relationship: an understanding shaped by the U.S. juridical and historical model and, in the case of the Catholic variant, by the new understanding that Vatican II brought to this issue. This understanding of the church-society relationship manages to respect the autonomy of

society and its present pluralism without denying the public role of the church in it at the cultural and even the political level. The church itself is viewed also as containing a particular pluralism within it. The church is viewed as composed of communities in dialogue with society. These communities and the dialogue help the church forge its position on social issues. Because I believe this view of the church and of its relationship with society is well balanced and fully suitable to postmodern times, I would like to propose it as a basis for Catholic social thinking inside the Spanish context. Indeed, I would apply to the movement or style of public theology the same statement Hollenbach applies to Murray's effort to develop religious freedom inside Catholic thought. Public theology ultimately would not be just a way to do theology, nor a view of the church-society relationship; it would ultimately be a means to empower the church in order to participate in society.[338]

[338] Cf. Hollenbach, *The Global Face of Public Faith*, 142ff.

# CHAPTER 2. CAN WE DO PUBLIC THEOLOGY IN A DISENCHANTED WORLD? PAUL VALADIER, S.J.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The scope of this work, as clearly stated from its very beginning, is: to search for ways to bring theology into the public sphere in a particular socio-economic and political context, namely Spanish society. Although I have already acknowledged the value I give to the U.S. current of public theology, my experience as a Spaniard living in the U.S. has shown me the major cultural differences between the two social realities. It is unreasonable to pretend that these cultural and historical differences do not affect the way we do theology and how we face social challenges.[339] Such an attitude fails to honor the complexity of reality and bypasses the challenges posed by the situation that colors our theological reflection. Therefore, I want now to offer what I believe to be a constructive comparison between two theological currents: the U.S. public theology current as described above, and the work of the French Jesuit Paul Valadier.

I have chosen Paul Valadier as one of the terms of the comparison because I believe his works reveal an implicit goal very similar to that of public theology in spite of the many differences that can be perceived. I believe Valadier can serve as a bridge to cross the Atlantic, that is to say, as a point of comparison that will highlight the fresh insights of

[339] This view, without renouncing the universal scope of Catholicism, is John Coleman's position explicitly inspired by David Tracy. "Theology as a living enterprise demands interpretative reconstruction of the received symbols of the tradition to contextual questions arising from very particular places, times and problems." Coleman, *An American Strategic Theology*, 131.

public theology that are promising to share with Spanish society, and allow us to identify the elements that are unsuitable for addressing the European public sphere.

Although Europe is a very heterogeneous reality, formed by rich and varied cultures, there are nevertheless some common traits of the general intellectual milieu that allow us to approach it as a whole, especially when speaking of what we might call Latin-Europe,[340] countries in Europe with cultures strongly rooted in the Roman tradition (Portugal, Spain, France, Italy). When speaking about issues of politics and society in these countries, we should acknowledge the particular influence that French culture continues to play. It is enough to see how the French model of *laïcité* has been a major reference in all these countries in order to consider the separation between Church and state, either to attack it or to support it.[341] This fact allows me to consider Valadier, a thinker reflecting critically inside this French *milieu*, as an appropriate introduction to this European context.

There are various ways to portray the differences between the U.S. and the European cultures. I find particularly insightful John Coleman's suggestion that the difference between the cultural environments of Europe and the U.S. is, in his words, the lack of "any vigorous social movement which embodied what has been called 'The Second

[340] I take this term of Latin Europe from Hermínio Rico, *John Paul II and the Legacy of Dignitatis Humanae* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 21.

[341] "El modelo republican francés fue el que más afectó a los países del Sur de Europa, ejerciendo un influjo permanente en España que llega hasta hoy en las dos corrientes que sustenta. Junto a la laicidad, perdura también la corriente laicista militante, claramente antirreligiosa." Estrada, *El cristianismo en una sociedad laica,* 165. Cf. also Jordi López Camps, *Asuntos religiosos: Una propuesta de política pública* (Madrid: PPC, 2010), 178ff . Another acknowlegment of the French influence can be found in Luis González-Carvajal, *Los cristianos en un estado laico* (Madrid: PPC, 2008), 19–25.

Enlightenment.'"[342] With this expression, Coleman reflects the fact that America has deeply assumed the values of the 18th century "First Enlightenment" –pragmatic progress and scientism—while the suspicious and corrective view of these values shared by Marx, Nietzsche, Freud and Weber has been less influential. Contrary to this, the European cultural *milieu*, and particularly the European Christian culture, has been deeply shaped by its dialogue with this critical view.[343]

An excellent way to express this fact is through the expression "disenchantment of the world" which formulates one of the main effects of that "Second Enlightenment:" the secularization process. This expression, coined by Max Weber,[344] has become a main image to convey the social and cultural situation of the European societies which witnessed a strong decline of religious belief and a smaller and smaller presence of religious belief in the public sphere. One proof of this expression's validity is that Marcel Gauchet, an important contemporary French philosopher, also used Weber's expression "disenchantment of the world" as the title of one of his major works.[345] We have seen, however, that the term secularization is a complex term which can have different senses

[342] Coleman, *An American Strategic Theology*, 190.

[343] Cf. Ibid.

[344] "It is the fate of our age, with the rationalization, intellectualization and, in particular, the disenchantment of the world, characteristic of it, that precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have faded from public life, entering either the obscure realm of mystical life or the fraternal feelings of direct relationships among individuals." Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in *Max Weber's Complete Writings on Academic and Political Vocations*, ed. John Dreijmanis, trans. Gordon C. Wells (New York: Algora, 2008), 51.

[345] Marcel Gauchet, *Le désenchantement du monde* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985).

that should be accurately differentiated.[346] In the case of Max Weber, disenchantment of the world refers to the growing capacity of science to explain the world, a reality which is pushing moral and religious values away.[347] For Gauchet disenchantment of the world means that the appearance of Christianity started a process of separating nature from God. This fostered an enlarged role of sciences, which in turn will lead to the end of all religion. Christianity is the religion that definitely accomplishes this process of disenchantment of the world.[348] Max Weber and Marcel Gauchet's understanding of the secularization process represents a well known reading of it. In the U.S. context Peter Berger has proposed a quite similar reading. For him the disenchantment of the world has roots in the biblical religion of the Old Testament.[349] Likewise for Berger Christianity itself is at the root of the process of secularization.[350]

Throughout his career, Paul Valadier, in dialogue with both Max Weber and Marcel Gauchet, [351] has tried to develop a Christian understanding of this disenchantment of the world so present in the Western world and particularly in Europe. Moreover, Valadier, being ultimately a moral theologian, has toiled to develop a moral theology framework

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[346] The work of José Casanova distinguishing three different senses of secularization, as we have already mentioned in the first chapter, continues to be a precious and clarifying study of this concept. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*.

[347] Cf. Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 35.

[348] Cf. Gauchet, *Le Désenchantement du monde*, 11.

[349] Cf. Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), 120–121.

[350] Cf. Ibid., 107 and 123.

[351] Cf. for example Valadier, *Détresse du politique, force du religieux*, 259–264.

capable of addressing the challenges posed to the agency of Christians in society by this secularization process. This fact makes Valadier's thought a very valuable point of reference in evaluating the assets and limitations of public theology when addressing the European context. Therefore, Paul Valadier will be for us the touchstone which will allow us to test how public theology might fit into the disenchanted European societies.

In this chapter, I will first present briefly Paul Valadier's thought about the relationship between Church and society. Secondly, I will compare it with the current of public theology in order to identify first the main insight that public theology brings to the fore, and then the contribution that Valadier offers to this approach. Third, I will present two examples of moral arguments as they have been presented by public theologians and by Paul Valadier in order to compare their ways of arguing. In a final section I will try to gather the main points of our reflection as they will serve us when building a public theology for the Spanish context.

## II. PAUL VALADIER SJ

### 1. HIS WORK

Paul Valadier (born 1933) is a French Jesuit who is professor of moral and political philosophy at the Jesuit theology faculty in Paris, Centre Sèvres. He has been editor in chief of the famous review *Études*, a prominent Jesuit review on philosophy and culture. He is also director of the review *Archives de Philosophie.*

Valadier is a scholar of vast knowledge who has written at the crossroads of philosophy and theology. He has a strong concern for deeply enrooting his thought in philosophy as a

way to dialogue with the modern world. His doctoral dissertation was on the dialogue between Nietzsche and Christianity;[352] this dialogical and controversial approach will color the whole of his work.

One constant in all Valadier's work is a concern to reflect on the similarities and oppositions between Nietzsche's philosophy and Christian faith.[353] Nevertheless, Valadier's interests have a wider scope. Firstly, he has always been concerned with political philosophy and ethics[354] and with the Christian approach to it.[355] Secondly, in this same line, he has also reflected on the role and identity of the Catholic Church in secularized societies.[356] Finally, Valadier has worked to develop a Catholic moral theology based on solid philosophical foundations.[357] These different topics fill a bibliography which has become immense – he has published 27 books as of this writing. In the course of our study we will rely upon his main works in the various fields in which he has worked.

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[352] Paul Valadier, *Nietzsche et la critique du christianisme* (Paris: Cerf, 1974).

[353] Paul Valadier, *Jésus-Christ ou dionysos: La foi chrétienne en confrontation avec Nietzsche* (Paris: Desclée, 2004 [orig. pub. 1979]).

[354] Paul Valadier, *Agir en politique: Décision morale et pluralisme politique* (Paris: Cerf, 1979); Paul Valadier, *Machiavel et la fragilité du politique* (Paris: Seuil, 1996).

[355] Valadier, *Détresse du politique, force du religieux*; Paul Valadier, *Maritain à contre-temps: Pour une démocratie vivante* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2007); Paul Valadier, *Du spirituel en politique* (Paris: Bayard, 2008).

[356] Paul Valadier, *L'Église en procès: Catholicisme et société moderne* (Paris: Flammarion, 1989); Paul Valadier, *Un christianisme d'avenir: Pour une nouvelle alliance entre raison et foi* (Paris: Seuil, 1999).

[357] Valadier, *Inévitable morale*; Paul Valadier, *Éloge de la conscience* (Paris: Seuil, 1994); Paul Valadier, *La condition chrétienne, du monde sans en être* (Paris: Seuil, 2003); Paul Valadier, *La morale sort de l'ombre* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2008).

## 2. VALADIER'S PROPOSAL ON THE "THEOLOGICO-POLITICAL"

Paul Valadier is particularly known for his contributions to the renewal of casuistry and to a modern understanding of conscience.[358] However, throughout his career, he has also drawn a very complete image of the ethics of socio-political life and the Christian approach to it from the tradition of moral theology. It is not my goal to rehearse the whole of its thought, which would require an entire dissertation in itself, but to achieve a synthesis of Valadier's view on the relationship between Church and society.[359] Of course this synthesis should be coherent with the whole of his thought, and we will see how the reader is invited to penetrate more deeply into Valadier's thought by the approach adopted here.

This category, Church-society relationship, is not present as such in Valadier's vocabulary. He uses another expression that largely overlaps with it. Valadier speaks of the category of the "theologico-political."[360] Valadier describes this expression asserting that

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[358] Cf. James F. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology in the Twentieth Century: From Confessing Sins to Liberating Consciences* (New York: Continuum, 2010), 47–49 and 97.

[359] When studying the work of Paul Valadier we should take into consideration that he is focusing his discourse almost always on the Catholic Church. This is understandable, given the fact that he is writing as a Catholic priest and in a context like French society which, in spite of its growing pluralism, has been shaped by Catholicism. Moreover, Valadier explicitly acknowledges this partial point of view, asserting that he believes it is better to acknowledge it than to unrealistically try to adopt a neutral point of view able to speak in the name of every religion. "Pour poser ces questions, on se situera dans le cadre du christianisme catholique, non parce qu'on estimerait que ce point de vue est le seul possible, ou le plus pertinent, ou le plus adéquat, mais parce qu'on ne pourrait qu'illusoirement adopter tous les points de vue, et croire qu'on pourrait tour à tour faire parler chaque religion." Valadier, *Un christianisme d'avenir*, 14.

[360] The expression "theologico-political" comes from Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologicus-Politicus* (1670). The expression is pressent in the French intellectual *milieu*, and Claude Lefort has written a series of essays employing this term. Paul Valadier, "Permanence du théologico-politique: Politique et religion, de nouvelle [données]," in *La morale sort de l'ombre* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2008), 287 note 3; The use of this term already shows us an important element of the French perspective on the church-society relationship. There is a tendency in common French republicanism to consider the political dimension as the synthesis of society. "La philosophie politique dite classique a souvent méconnu cet enracinement sensible et affectif... L'intégration politique, l'acceptation de la souveraineté étatique ou son contrôle devenaient alors des enjeux

"it supposes the confrontation between two powers, the profane and the religious, and it tries to define the borders between these powers avoiding precisely the conjunction between the political and the theological dimensions, the states and the Church."[361] Therefore Valadier identifies two entities which correspond to the pair Church-society, although when referring to society he stresses especially its political organization. The challenge in any case is to present a fair articulation of these two elements.

A synthesis of Valadier's view on the theologico-political should reflect three dimensions of his thought: first a reading of the social context and its juridical framework; second, a theological method; and finally a proposal on the relationships between religion and politics.

### *a) A READING OF THE SOCIAL CONTEXT*

#### *i. Pluralism and Secularization*

In a way similar to what public theologians do, Valadier has often presented in his thought a main characteristic of contemporary western societies; pluralism. He describes pluralism as the situation of modern democracies where no particular philosophy or ideology imposes its view. Instead, a pluralistic society follows ultimately the whole set of

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centraux, et la conquête de la citoyenneté politique faisait littéralement passer de l'indistinction naturelle au statut de la liberté civile" Valadier, *Inévitable morale*, 155.

[361] "Elle suppose l'affrontement de deux pouvoirs, le profane et le religieux et tente de préciser les frontières de ces pouvoirs en évitant justement la conjonction du politique et du théologique, des États et de l'Église." Valadier, "Permanence Du Théologico-politique: Politique Et Religion, De Nouvelle [donnée]," 287, note 3. The translations from the original French text are mine.

different positions present in it.[362] Modern democracy is composed of different domains with their own regulations and thus it lacks a common authoritative voice able to impose a common view on its whole.[363] Following Claude Lefort, Paul Valadier speaks of democracy as a political system where the place of power is empty.[364] This means that democracy is a political system whose rules and values should constantly be sought and discussed among all positions present in society.[365] Therefore, pluralism is not just an accident of modern times; it is an essential characteristic of modern democracies.

However, Valadier, inspired by Weber's idea of disenchantment, connects this pluralism with the process of secularization. The secularization process, or disenchantment of the world, is defined by Valadier as "the process of an always finer and more precise differentiation of the real;"[366] that is to say a process where more and more things in life are explained through an increasingly specialized scientific knowledge.[367] Therefore this social process implies that the various disciplines of knowledge become more and more

[362] "[Démocratie] fait corps avec le pluralisme, puisqu'aucune philosophie ou morale officielle en commande les décisions, mais que cette société tisse son avenir dans l'entrecroisement régé de diverses traditions éthiques ou religieuses qui la constituent." Valadier, *L'Église en procès*, 35.

[363] "Une société moderne ne connaissant aucune instance régulatrice de l'ensemble social, dans sa structure ou dans son développement, ni religieux ni idéologique, laisse jouer en elle les domaines divers qui la constituent et l'engendrent selon leurs régulations propres et spécifiques." Ibid., 33.

[364] "Une société moderne fait corps avec la démocratie... puisque par conséquent, selon le mot de certains philosophes, le lieu du pouvoir est 'vide' (apte à être occupé provisoirement par tout représentant dûment mandaté)." Ibid., 34–35; cf. also Valadier, *La morale sort de l'ombre*.

[365] Cf. Valadier, *L'Église en procès*, 33.

[366] "La sécularisation n'est que le processus d'une différentiation toujours plus fine et plus précise du réel." Ibid., 20.

[367] Cf. Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 35.

specialized and distinct. This distinction is the origin of pluralism in society for Valadier.[368] Pluralism is, thus, ultimately a fruit of this process of secularization, or of disenchantment in Weber's words.[369]

Secularization for Valadier is the cause of three main traits of the situation of religion in modern societies: the separation between church and state; the tendency to reduce religion to the private sphere; and the application of experimental approaches to more and more dimensions of reality. This last trait is responsible for the relativization of all overarching knowledge of reality, e.g. theology.[370] However, the secularization process is ultimately not a problem at all when it is properly understood.[371] Secularization as a process of differentiation of domains does not necessarily imply a conflict unless one domain tries to impose itself upon the others. Moreover, secularization itself is partly a natural process that is the result of the influence of Christian faith in western societies.[372]

The secularization process is also an opportunity for the Christian faith and the Catholic Church. The pluralism that it supposes constantly reminds the Church of the need to present its proposal and values in a way understandable for critical reason. Avoiding any risk of

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[368] "Le mode moderne de connaissance... est perspectiviste; il ne procède pas par surplomb, mais à partir d'ancrages particuliers: celui d'un enracinement subjectif reconnu, d'une méthode particulière, limitée dans ses procédures et dans son champ d'application, etc." Valadier, *Agir en politique*, 65.

[369] Cf. Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 35.

[370] Cf. Valadier, *L'Église en procès*, 17–19.

[371] Valadier points out how, when Vatican II in *Gaudium et Spes* 36 speaks of the autonomy of terrestrial realities, it is asserting the need of a correct secularization. Cf. Ibid., 25ff.

[372] Particularly interesting in this regard is the lecture that Paul Valadier gave at Boston College in 2008, presenting a synthesis of his views on secularization. Cf. Paul Valadier, "Is Roman Catholicism Anti-secular?" (Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA, October 29, 2008).

sectarianism or nostalgia for Medieval Christendom. It also forces the Church to be attentive and to listen to other opinions and critics.[373] Secularization becomes problematic, and should be rejected, only when one social domain aspires to provide the ultimate source of meaning. Many are the domains of society which risk assuming such a position. It can be science, or the state, or even the very effort to remain neutral in society toward all religions (i.e. any exclusive understanding of laicity*)*.[374] In these cases we speak of secularism.[375]

Valadier also introduces some nuances in his understanding of pluralism reflecting the particular shapes it takes when seen in French society, and the influence of a secularist understanding of pluralism present in the French-republican tradition. Firstly, he notices a tendency toward Manichaeism in French society which tends to see the opponent as absolutely evil. These attitudes prevent the social actors from making a constructive use of social pluralism.[376] Manichaeism supposes a non-realistic judgment of the other's intention

[373] Cf. Ibid., 16.

[374] Although he does not make the distinctions with the same precision, Valadier's understanding of secularization, and its distinction from secularism, would be close to José Casanova's distinction of three different meanings of secularization. Casanova's third meaning of secularization, marginalization of religion to a privatized sphere, would correspond to Valadier's secularism; cf. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, 211; moreover, Casanova's thesis of a contemporary "deprivatization" of religion would coincide with Valadier's perception of a change in the role of religions in society. Cf. Ibid., 211–234; from Paul Valadier cf. for example Valadier, *Un christianisme d'avenir*.

[375] Cf. Valadier, *L'Église en procès*, 20–21; . We can perceive in Valadier a progressive awareness of the negative effects of secularism and its larger presence in society, cf. Valadier, *Détresse du politique, force du religieux*, 126ff.

[376] "Or la présence du manichéisme étend son ombre sur la réalité politique et sociale française de façon tout à fait frappante. La vie politique française vit, par exemple, sur un certain nombre d'oppositions duelles, qui sont à accepter comme telles en tout examen d'entrée dans le militantisme." Valadier, *Agir en politique*, 26.

beyond its appearance or empirical examination.[377] Valadier sees the seeds of these attitudes in the Jacobin attitudes during the French Revolution as well as in the influence of the Marxist ideology – particularly the class struggle – in France during the twentieth century.

Secondly, in spite of his effort to develop a positive understanding of the modern secularization process, Valadier is critical of the way the Catholic Church is perceived in contemporary pluralistic France. He asserts first that the Catholic Church, although having become a minority denomination in French society, is still perceived and judged as a majority one.[378] Therefore, because of sheer historical inertia, it is viewed as threatening to impose its view on society. Second, he identifies a cultural disqualification of Catholicism (and other Christian denominations) which considers them as non-rational or non-serious and excludes them from the public debate.[379] For Valadier this prejudice present in French culture makes it difficult to present the Church as a partner seeking the common good in the social dialogue in France.[380]

Finally Valadier will gradually consider how pluralism has evolved in accord with the changes which happened in French society because of the immigration phenomenon. World

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[377] "Le jugement moral en politique doit s'interdire de remonter à l'intention de l'acteur; il doit porter sur l'apparence et s'en tenir à elle; il vise les effets d'un acte ou d'une décision, ceux que livre l'examen empirique de ce qui a effectivement lieu dans le champ social et politique." Ibid., 36.

[378] "[Le Catholicisme] souffre en France d'un double handicap: d'une part, il est devenu une confession minoritaire, tout en continuant à passer pour majoritaire" Valadier, *Un christianisme d'avenir*, 50–51.

[379] "[La disqualification culturelle] provient largement de notre préjugé laïciste, qui exclut le 'religieux' du sérieux scientifique ou du débat public" Ibid., 59–60.

[380] Cf. Ibid., 65.

migrations suppose the presence of increasing numbers of immigrants in France, as throughout much of Europe, coming from different cultures (Africa, Latin-America, Asia, etc.) and practicing different religions – particularly Islam. This fact poses challenging new questions to the, until now, relatively homogenous European societies.[381] Pluralism is no longer limited to moral views, but becomes more a religious pluralism. Society is, thus, forced to take further into consideration the different religions in its midst, and, therefore, to rethink its understanding of secularization.[382] But the Church is also confronted by these changes in pluralism. The present larger presence of religion in society is not without risk. This new presence fosters a reaction to the identity crisis of post-modernity which impels the religious feeling toward two extremes: religious fundamentalism or a closed sectarian attitude. In either case religions lose their ability to reflect peacefully and convey their arguments to society in an intelligible way. This is also a temptation for the Catholic Church today. Therefore the Church should avoid this risk and strive to develop a self-understanding adequate to modern times. This will allow the Church to have a significant and constructive presence in modern plural societies.[383]

[381] "[La violence] peut apparaître sous la forme de la présence de l'autre, des autres agglomérés en groupes sociaux, ethniques, raciaux, religieux, qui sont ou semblent être étrangers à la substance éthique de la nation" Valadier, *Inévitable morale*, 132.

[382] Valadier stresses especially the role that Muslims are playing in this social change, cf. Valadier, *Détresse du politique, force du religieux*, 128ff.

[383] Cf. Valadier, *Un christianisme d'avenir*, 30ff.

*ii. Laïcité*

In French society, the understanding of secularization and pluralism, shaped by its particular historical circumstances, is framed in a rather particular social, cultural and juridical framework, what is called *laïcité française.*[384] The term laicity refers to the way any country acknowledges the various beliefs existing in its midst assuring the neutrality of the public institutions. When we apply it with reference to Christian belief we speak of it as the separation of Church and state.[385] There are different ways to implement laicity ranging from an exclusive attitude toward religion to an inclusive and open one.[386]

Valadier identifies the present French laicity as inspired by a particular French understanding of the republican tradition in political philosophy. This French republican tradition, which draws from Rousseau and Jacobin thought, sees the state as having a major and exclusive role in society. Therefore, there is a certain distrust for civil society and religions are relegated to the private sphere in order not to compete with the state for

[384] In an 2009 article the editorial board of the *Revista de Fomento Social* when presenting the different models of religious freedom in Europe, identified French laïcité with the "Exclusive lay model" and defined it thus: "En la Europa contemporánea, algunos Estados, singularmente Francia, han ido definiendo una forma de relaciones entre religiones y Estado basadas en el respeto y protección de la creencia y la práctica religiosa, pero con la absoluta neutralidad estatal ante las mismas y con exclusión expresa de cualquier reconocimiento estatal de las religiones en el espacio público." Editorial Board, "La libertad religiosa en España. ¿Hacia un nuevo modelo normativo?," *Revista de Fomento Social*, no. 255 (September 2009): 403.

[385] "Si la privatisation a un sens acceptable dans la laïcité (pleine reconnaissance de la diversité des systèmes de croyances, mais acceptation d'une neutralité publique favorisant la vie commune)." Valadier, *L'Église en procès*, 21.

[386] In a 1943 pastoral letter the French bishops differentiated between laicity as autonomy, respectful neutral laicity, hostile agnostic laicity and indifferent laicity. When well understood, the bishops assert that the first two types of laicity are perfectly compatible with the Social Teaching of the Church. Cf. Pastoral letter of November 12th, 1943 on the occasion of the Constitution of the IV Republic, quoted in Carlos Corral, *La relación entre la Iglesia y la comunidad política* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2003), 196–197.

control of society.[387] Although he is aware of the values behind French republicanism, Valadier criticizes this very common exclusive understanding of laicity in French society. Reflecting from his Catholic background, Valadier rejects this distrust of any particularity and beliefs of the citizens because it cancels the possibility of religions contributing to social life. In his opinion, religions are reserves of meaning from which human reason should extract new insights on social life.[388] This particular French understanding of *laïcité* cannot be as easily associated with a particular juridical norm as in the U.S. case – the first amendment of the U.S Constitution. It is more a social and cultural attitude toward religion.[389] This understanding sees religions as a cause of division and as an irrational position. Therefore it pushes them to the margins of society.[390]

Paul Valadier suggests that this classical French understanding of laicity should evolve by acknowledging the changes in the role of the state and religions in contemporary

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[387] Cf. Valadier, *Détresse du politique, force du religieux*, 105ff.

[388] Cf. Ibid., 139.

[389] However, some concrete juridical references can be pointed out. The French Constitution of 1958 describes France as a "République indivisible, laïque, démocratique et sociale." "Constitution of France 1958", accessed December 13, 2011, http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/connaissance/constitution_0611.pdf; The same constitution includes the Declaration of the Rights of Man from 1789 which proclaim religious freedom in the following terms: "Nul ne doit être inquiété pour ses opinions, même religieuses, pourvu que leur manifestation ne trouble pas l'ordre public établi par la Loi." Ibid.; The 1905 law of separation of Church and State, the ultimate expression of French *laïcité* system uses this idea of "public order" as the reason to control and limit expressions of that religious freedom: "La République assure la liberté de conscience. Elle garantit le libre exercice des cultes sous les seules restrictions édictées ci-après dans l'intérêt de l'ordre public." "Loi 1905 concernant la séparation de l'Église et de l'État", accessed December 13, 2011, http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/histoire/eglise-etat/sommaire.asp#loi.

[390] "Selon sa formule rigoureuse et exclusive qui fut en honneur à la fin du XIXe siècle et depuis, cette laïcité s'inscrit en défiance à l'égard des religions, et notamment du catholicisme; en cela, elle est fille de l'idéologie révolutionnaire centralisatrice, suspectant toute particularité d'être factieuse; elle renvoie donc à la marge de la vie publique les traditions morales et culturelles sous le prétexte qu'elles divisent, qu'elles introduisent la passion de l'irrationnel, qu'elles ont des desseins hégémoniques." Valadier, *Inévitable morale*, 212–213.

societies.[391] From the interior of the French cultural tradition, and as a result of the major changes that occurred in French society and in the world in the past 30 years, Valadier pleads for a renewal of the principles behind French *laïcité*.[392] This renewal supposes for him a wider consideration of the role of religions in society and a willingness to collaborate with them.[393] At one point, Valadier speaks of the need to develop a "positive figure" of *laïcité*.[394]

### b) *Method for Moral Theology*

Valadier's reading of the socio-historical reality he is living in – the disenchanted world—determines the way he does moral theology. We can say that Valadier outlines a conscience-based social ethics in which the priority of any decision lies in the individual conscience. This conscience-based view does not descend into individualism but includes the social dimension. In Valadier's view pluralistic society furnishes the basic material from which to start moral reflection (the ethics of the society) and helps to form conscience itself through social interaction.

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[391] Cf. Valadier, *Détresse du politique, force du religieux*, 135.

[392] "Il faudrait admettre que la nouveauté des situations appelle un renouvellement des principes de la laïcité, leur élargissement ou leur assouplissement, pour passer de l''incompétence' à l''intelligence.' Le chemin semble long." Ibid., 134.

[393] "Ce qui implique que l'on passe de l''ignorance' envers les religions à l'acceptation de leur présence dans la société civile." Ibid., 136.

[394] "Il montre que sa figure négative pourrait laisser place à une figure positive, pour laquelle les traditions morales et religieuses, effectivement présentes dans l'espace social français seraient prises en considération et sollicités de faire valoir leur point de vue." Valadier, *Inévitable Morale*, 214; this reference seems to announce the debate that Nicolas Sarkozy opened in 2007 during his visit to the Vatican, when he introduced the idea of a "positive *laïcité*." "Discours Sarkozy Basilique de Latran 2007," December 22, 2007, http://www.france-catholique.fr/Discours-de-Nicolas-Sarkozy-au.html.

*i. Decision*

Because Valadier is ultimately a moral philosopher and a moral theologian, his entire moral method has the main goal of helping the individual to make ethical decisions.[395] After going through a process of argumentation and discussion, the individual's conscience should face the hardest test of all: making an option, committing herself to what she considers right.[396] In spite of all the previous discussion, the ultimate responsibility of a decision will always be the individual's. The decision will always be then conditioned by one's past, one's character and the real possibilities of implementing the decision.[397]

But moral decision is not limited to the individual's life. Moral decision is also pertinent in political life. Valadier invites us to consider the human being as able to build her own history and society within the limits of her humanity. It is possible to discern which is the better course for society and implement it. The contrary would be pure technocracy.[398] Nevertheless, Valadier asserts that this moral approach to society and politics should be done in dialogue with other technical approaches.

When considering the social dimension of life, this central role of decision supposes three postulates: that society and social life are not mere chaos but contain some guidelines;

[395] "Une réflexion éthique sur la politique est nécessairement centrée sur la décision: les relations humaines qui structurent une société ne trouvent sens humain que si les hommes (coalisés) leur infusent du sens, se décident à ne pas être passifs, et écartent d'eux la tentation du fatalisme." Valadier, *Agir en politique*, 135; "C'est oublier en effet à quel point l'épreuve de la décision est un élément constitutif et essentiel de la vie morale. Le processus communicationnel n'a de sens que dans la stricte mesure où il débouche sur la prise de responsabilité." Valadier, *Éloge de la conscience*, 170.

[396] Cf. Valadier, *Éloge de la conscience*, 170.

[397] Ibid., 171.

[398] Cf. Valadier, *Agir en politique*, 45ff.

that the world is not based on necessity but we can alter it with our actions; and that if we act in society, it is because we experience the need to act in order to respond to the situation we are facing.[399] Our freedom is thus exercised in society by accepting some particular conditions that shape society. These conditions constrain our freedom, but they also make it truly human.[400]

The central role of decision, and therefore of human freedom, when dealing with social issues supposes that it is not only political and economic leaders who are impelled to exercise options and determine by what happens in society. Every citizen should be morally confronted by events within society. The different roles of the various social actors are based on the different responsibility they have for the outcome of the situation.[401]

This central role of decision and the way it engages every citizen supposes also that the individual, contrary to a common perception, is not powerless in front of society. The individual is powerless to influence society through interpersonal relationships. Valadier calls these relationships "short" relationships or mediations. But the individual can actually influence society through the complex network of relationships which structures politics,

[399] Cf. Ibid., 141–142.

[400] "C'est pourquoi, loin de contredire la liberté (et l'action raisonnable), le repérage des contraintes, inscrites dans le champ à transformer, est la condition d'exercice d'une liberté vraiment humaine." Ibid., 142.

[401] "Une analyse éthique et morale soucieuse du concret ne peut ignorer que la responsabilité du citoyen n'est pas équivalente à celle de l'homme politique, et ici encore la responsabilité d'un chef d'État ou d'un ministre n'est pas celle d'un député de l'opposition. Tous ont quelque responsabilité, et leur décisions les engagent, mais évidement pas au même titre." Ibid., 148–149.

the economy or international politics.[402] Valadier calls these structures "long" relationships or mediations. Therefore, the individual cannot expect to have an effect in society acting individually, but only when associated with others. Only when accepting the limits and possibilities of "long" relationships – that is to say, social institutions such as trade unions, political parties, cultural associations or churches— can individuals exercise efficient action upon history.[403]

### *ii. Conscience as the Key of Ethics*

Because of the increasing differentiation of disciplines of knowledge and a lack of a common overarching moral view of reality (that is to say, pluralism) and because of the central role of decision, [404] for Paul Valadier conscience is a key factor in any modern ethics.[405] Paul Valadier is an heir of the revisionist movement in moral theology of the 20th century which broke with the previous manualist tradition. Dom Odon Lottin (1880-1965) was the first to place conscience as foundational to moral life, and his insights were then

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[402] "Les secondes jouent à travers des relais complexes et peu visibles; elles structurent le champ de l'économie, le marché financier ou les rapports internationaux." Ibid., 136.

[403] "L'individu quelconque (vous et moi) ne peut prétendre agir qu'en travaillant dans ces médiations longues que sont les syndicats, les partis, les associations culturelles, les Églises... Car apparaît vite que l'action efficace sur l'histoire passe par la coalition sous forme d'institutions." Ibid., 137.

[404] "Traiter de la conscience morale consiste en réalité à aborder la nature même de la vie morale en son point central: la décision, c'est-à-dire le choix que fait une personne de s'engager sur un acte qu'elle assume de manière à pouvoir en rendre compte devant elle-même comme devant autrui, et devant Dieu si elle est croyante." Valadier, *Éloge De La Conscience*, 11; "et si la conscience restait encore et toujours la seule référence cohérente avec nos sociétés démocratiques, la norme qui règle explicitement ou secrètement le débat public et ordonne l'agencement de la vie sociale et culturelle?" Ibid., 7.

[405] "C'est pourquoi la décision personnelle, ou la conscience, est nécessairement centrale dans une philosophie qui prend au sérieux la situation culturelle qui est la nôtre, parce qu'elle est le lieu à partir duquel peut être forgée une vie sensée, ici et maintenant." Valadier, *Éloge de la conscience*, 50.

adopted by Bernard Häring (1912-1998) who brought it to the documents of the Second Vatican Council.[406] Paul Valadier has developed this tradition inside the French context in dialogue with the Nietzschean critiques of morality and with modern moral and cultural pluralism.

Following the line of the revisionist movement, Valadier sees conscience more as something which pushes us forward doing good than accusing us of moral wrong.[407] For Paul Valadier conscience is that faculty in the human being that engages him in the act, after the individual has received and evaluated a maxim coming from society regarding how to behave.[408] For Valadier reflecting on conscience means ultimately reflecting on moral life itself as based on decisions that the person assumes as hers and feels responsible for. Reflecting on human conscience means affirming that humans are beings endowed with freedom who should opt between the different possibilities of their life.[409] In spite of modern critics of the concept of conscience – it is considered too fragile and subjective, for

[406] "In the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not impose upon himself, but which holds him to obedience. Always summoning him to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience when necessary speaks to his heart: do this, shun that. For man has in his heart a law written by God; to obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged. Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, Whose voice echoes in his depths. In a wonderful manner conscience reveals that law which is fulfilled by love of God and neighbor." "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern Word-*Gaudium Et Spes*," para. 16; Cf. Keenan, "Bernard Häring's Influence in American Catholic Moral Theology."

[407] Cf. Häring, *The Law of Christ: Moral Theology for Priests and Laity*, 1:144–146.

[408] "Comme on le voit, le lieu de passage entre éthique et morale est constitué par la conscience personnelle même; c'est elle qui engage un sujet dans son acte, après que celui-ci a reçu la maxime de son action, ou son contenu, de la société ou il vit (éthique), et qu'il en a éprouvé et reconnu la moralité (morale)." Valadier, *Éloge de la conscience*, 48.

[409] Cf. Ibid., 11.

Valadier it is a concept deeply enrooted in Western classic philosophy and in Christianity and it is an inevitable reference.[410]

Contemporary moral theology is aware that a view of the human being as a pure, autonomous and isolated being deciding freely in his conscience in an intellectual way about moral issues is too simplistic.[411] The individual's conscience is influenced and shaped at times by the community and the society where she lives. Paul Valadier has also developed his understanding of conscience in that sense. For Valadier, conscience should not be understood as pure subjectivism; he rather understands conscience as an instance that should be formed and continually enlightened, and therefore individual conscience is ultimately shaped and sustained partly by the communities to which the individual belongs.[412] Also because conscience is more than mere intellectual reflection and should inflame a true and holistic desire in the person, it should also be continually awakened. Valadier wants to respond to contemporary Nietzschean nihilism which considers any moral ideal as abstract and contrary to real human spontaneity. For Valadier conscience should be rooted in desire, the desire to do what is moral. In our modern relativistic societies this desire is very weak. Valadier considers that too high and unrealistic moral

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[410] Cf. Ibid., 19ff.

[411] The debates around autonomous ethics and an ethics of faith, as well as the recovery of virtue ethics has influenced this modern understanding of conscience. Cf. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology in the Twentieth Century*, 178ff and 217.

[412] "À ce titre, la conscience demande à être instruite en permanence, et ici le rôle des traditions morales et religieuses, notamment des Églises comme communautés interpellatrices, est essentiel, et pas seulement pour l'enfance, mais de manière constante… L'adulte en morale est au contraire celui qui sait qu'il a besoin d'être éveillé, secoué, interpellé, contesté pour que surgisse en lui une exigence morale véritable." Valadier, *Éloge de la conscience*, 149.

values can only weaken that desire even more. He asserts that this desire for what is moral, the ultimate motivation of conscience, is stimulated by negative experience of evil and injustice impossible to accept.[413] For Valadier, the experience of what is unacceptable in this world can structure our moral life and awaken the desire to do what is necessary to change that experienced injustice.[414]

A very interesting insight of Paul Valadier is his integration of conscience and modern societal pluralism. In accordance with most contemporary social thinkers, Valadier sees that modern societies are shaped by pluralism and constant change. This societal reality supposes that the moral question with which the individual is confronted frequently takes the shape of particular cases which exceed any previous moral framework.[415] A typical example is the new moral issues which constantly appear as a result of the development of biotechnologies. This brings Valadier to propose a renewal of casuistry and probabalism as a promising framework for ethics in our modern societies.[416] The difference with 16th-

[413] "Pour un désir enlisé ou incapable de (se) vouloir, ce ne sont sans doute pas les idéaux les plus élevés qui sont mobilisateurs; ceux-ci risquent bien plutôt d'écraser encore un peu plus un désir déjà évanescent. Par contre, l'expérience d'un mal ou d'une violence déterminée peut susciter une réaction et une prise de conscience parce qu'elle met devant une réalité impossible à accepter comme telle... En ce sens, l'expérience d'une certaine violence scandaleuse et inacceptable dans le monde peut être à la source de la conscience morale." Ibid., 151–152.

[414] This view explains his approach to moral theology in the form of individual cases. A fair objection to this view of the dynamic of desire would be to say that our contemporary world is full of injustice and, nevertheless, that does not awaken the desire to change that situation in the majority of the population.

[415] "La morale n'est pas morte, mais si les préoccupations morales refont surface, c'est très étrangement au premier abord par la nécessité de résoudre des cas, ou de trouver des solutions dans des situations dont personne ne paraît détenir assurément la clé." Valadier, *Inévitable morale*, 17.

[416] "Il n'est guère étonnant que la casuistique, appuyée sur le probabilisme, fasse retour actuellement, tout particulièrement dans les champs d'action pour lesquels la tradition laisse relativement sans chemins tout tracés." Valadier, *Éloge de la conscience*, 78; Valadier seems to be encouraged in this direction by his contact

century casuistry is that in Valadier's position the debate about cases will be done among the different religious and cultural traditions present in the pluralistic society. Therefore, we can say that the individual's conscience can be formed by the discussion among the different traditions.[417] Taking sides with the renewal of casuistry in moral ethics,[418] Valadier develops a critical approach to a main reference point of his own French culture; the figure of Blaise Pascal, who was historically the great critic of casuistry and probabilism.[419]

### *iii. The Levels in Ethics*[420]

The approach to the role of conscience in Paul Valadier's thought has already presented us with a distinction which is a major feature of his moral method. Human conscience engages the person in the act he is going to perform following particular maxims received from society. We see here already two different levels in moral reflection: the level of the maxims and habits received from society, and the level of individual reflection and moral

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with the book of Jonsen and Toulmin on the topic. Cf. Albert R. Jonsen and Stephen Edelston Toulmin, *The Abuse of Casuistry: A History of Moral Reasoning* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

[417] Cf. Valadier, *Éloge de la conscience*, 164–166.

[418] Cf. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology in the Twentieth Century*, 159–162.

[419] Valadier dedicates most of the second chapter of his book *Éloge de la conscience* to review the polemic between Blaise Pascal and the Jesuits in the 17th century. Cf. Valadier, *Éloge De La Conscience*, 51–92.

[420] For the translation of the French terms *morale* and *éthique*, I will base myself on Paul Ricoeur's translation into English. This translation is also confirmed by the use of the English language. For example, in *Webster's New World College Dictionary* "morals" is defined as "principles, standards, or habits with respect to right or wrong in conduct." Michael Agnes, ed., "Moral" (Cleveland: Wiley Publishing, 2007); on the other hand "ethics" has as one of its definitions "the system or code of morals of a particular person, religion, group, profession, etc." Michael Agnes, ed., "Ethics" (Cleveland: Wiley Publishing, 2007).

evaluation of those practices. Following Paul Ricoeur[421] Valadier distinguished two primary levels in ethics. First, the level of the ways of proceeding socially and culturally ruled what he calls "morals" (*éthique)*.[422] Second, the level of the universal, that is to say, the level of the reflection that evaluates ethically the particular circumstances of a precise situation to see if they really help to humanize our life, what he calls "ethics" (*morale)*.[423] The way Valadier understands ethics (*morale)* supposes that both levels are articulated; there is already an ethical dimension in morals, but this dimension should be accomplished in the ethic level through a personal decision.[424] This decision is inspired by the ethical virtue of honesty,[425] and is supposed to overcome the modern temptation of nihilism that

[421] "Now, what is there to say about the distinction proposed between ethics and morality? Nothing in their etymology or in the history of the use of the terms requires such a distinction... It is therefore by convention that I reserve the term 'ethics' for the aim of an accomplished life and the term 'morality' for the articulation of this aim in norms characterized at once by the claim to universality and by the effect of constraint." Paul Riecoeur, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 170.

[422] This level includes the ways of proceeding proper to politics which should be honored as an important element of human wisdom. Valadier praises Machiavelli as the first one to see this value of the rules of politics. Cf. Valadier, *Machiavel et la fragilité du politique*, 47.

[423] "À la suite de Hegel, on pourrait l'appeler le niveau de la moralité des mœurs (Sittlichkeit); à cause de sa connotation portant sur les moeurs, donc sur les manières de faire socialement ou culturellement réglées, nous l'appelons éthique. Niveau indispensable, sans lequel il n'y a pas d'acte moral possible. Niveau non suffisant cependant pour une existence morale réellement humaine. Il importe de le montrer en ressaisissant d'abord le mouvement qui a traversé notre démarche antérieure par une réflexion qui dégage le contenu proprement éthique de ce qui est impliqué dans les analyses plus circonstanciées. Il faudra ensuite établir que ce niveau contient déjà le moment moral proprement dit, mais que celui-là doit être explicité pour lui-même." Valadier, *Inévitable morale*, 174.

[424] "Une vie morale droite ne peut se situer entièrement à ce niveau-là... la certitude moral doit se gagner dans et par l'investissement personnel sur sa décision." Valadier, *Éloge de la conscience*, 47.

[425] Valadier defines honesty as "la disposition de celui qui, assumant un rôle, cherche à répondre au mieux en tentant de clarifier et la demande qui lui est faite et la réponse qu'il donnera." Valadier, *Inévitable Morale*, 182; although Valadier describes honesty as a virtue, his moral theology is not virtue-ethics based. We should rather see it as based in value theory. Cf. Valadier, *Agir en politique*, 144–145.

invites us to despair of any effort to embrace a more ethical behavior.[426] It is at this level of ethics that Valadier sees the possibility of social argumentation and discussion in pluralistic societies in order to universalize the moral maxims.[427]

In later works, as Valadier develops a more theological approach to the ethical questions, he will introduce a third level. This third level is the level of grace, or the Spirit in which the Christian is invited to live. It supposes what Valadier calls a logic of superabundance inspired by God's love. Valadier considers this level as a "meta-ethical" level in which we enter through listening to the call present in the Word of God.[428]

Valadier denies, thus, the existence of a specificity in Christian ethics. In coherence with the logic of the Incarnation, Scripture supposes that the person assumes the morals, the *ethos,* of his society and the human quest to make them more humane, more ethical. The Scriptures merely propose to those who adhere to them to assume this morality and this ethical quest in a logic of super-abundance, which is the sign of the Holy Spirit.[429]

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[426] Inspired by his deep knowledge of Nietzsche, Valadier speaks of nihilism as the temptation in the modern person of feeling herself powerless in front of the evil present in the world and thus despairing of the ethics ideals she could have. Cf. Valadier, *Inévitable morale*, 196.

[427] Cf. Ibid., 203ff.

[428] "Enfin une existence selon l'Esprit du Christ n'irait pas jusqu'au bout de sa logique, si elle ne cherchait pas à vivre la totalité de son existence, selon toutes ses dimensions, dans une logique de surabondance, à la manière du Dieu d'amour qui appelle à vivre par-delà la mort, à perdre pour pouvoir trouver la vraie vie. Troisième niveau (méta-éthique ou méta-moral) auquel on ne peut accéder que dans l'écoute de la Parole et sous la mouvance de la grâce, ou de l'Esprit." Valadier, *La condition chrétienne*, 196–197.

[429] "[Les Écritures] appellent à assumer les mœurs trouvées dans sa société en un temps donné, mais à les vivre selon un discernement spirituel et une vigilance soucieuse du service des hommes et de Dieu (service qui ne fait qu'un). Elles proposent encore à qui adhère librement au message à assumer son existence dans la joyeuse liberté des fils/filles de Dieu qui misent sur la gratuité et la surabondance." Ibid., 197.

The differentiation of these three levels in ethical reflection – morals, ethics and the metha-ethical inspiration of faith—supposes a wider understanding of moral theology. Valadier asserts that the term moral theology does not fully reflect the scope of his work. He prefers the term theology of ethics (*theologie de la morale)* because, for him, theology does not merely furnish the Christian with references for his life, but proves the universality of its propositions.[430]

### *iv. Discussion*

The pluralism of our disenchanted modern societies poses a major question: how can we offer ethical guidance to personal decisions taken in good conscience when there is no single ethical view that governs society? To answer this question, Valadier brings in the role of discussion in ethics.[431] We have seen that modern pluralistic democracies are political systems based on deliberation: because no moral view is shared by all, its main values should be explicitly agreed upon and redefined constantly through discussion.[432] In order to decide and act in society, the individual should form and clarify her conscience looking for rules of action that can be considered universal. Because of the complexity and plurality of modern democracies these rules of action should be sought through discussion

[430] Valadier's view of moral theology as *theologie de la morale* has many similarities with Gallagher's use of the term theological ethics to refer to the field of moral theology. "Catholic theological ethics is a university-based academic discipline which seeks to mediate between a living religious tradition and a culture." John A. Gallagher, *Time Past, Time Future: An Historical Study of Catholic Moral Theology* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2003 [orig. pub. 1990]), 272.

[431] "Pluralisme en effet ne peut vouloir signifier acceptation pure et simple des rapports de forces... Il s'agit de comprendre au contraire que la décision morale, en matière politique, doit naître de la discussion, ou du conflit conduit en vue de la discussion raisonnable." Valadier, *Agir en politique*, 89.

[432] Cf. Valadier, *L'Église en procès*, 34.

with other traditions present in society.[433] Valadier believes, thus, that it is possible to have common ethical references and values in a pluralistic society. These ethical references help to make societies more human. The best example of this common morality is the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[434] Valadier proposes discussion also as a major element of the church's life. The idea of a *sensus fidelium* ultimately means that the reception or not of the church's teachings by the faithful is a discerning sign for the church's *magisterium*. Valadier invites then the hierarchy of the Catholic Church to implement more listening and discussion in elaborating its moral magisterium.[435]

Valadier is not clear about the way this discussion in society should be shaped. He asserts at some points that arguments should come from the particular positions of the different actors.[436] On other occasions he speaks of different types of arguments in function of the circumstances.[437] He also mentions at some points the communication ethics of

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[433] "La conscience reçoit... puisqu'elle se voit éventuellement confirmée par les raisons d'autrui, donc confrontée en soi par l'autre, rassuré sur ses propos, encouragée à l'action; elle se trouve ainsi fortifié dans ses convictions par la médiations d'autrui." Valadier, *Éloge De La Conscience*, 169.

[434] "Un cadre en quelque sorte institutionnel existe, à l'intérieur duquel il est possible de chercher l'accord sur quelques valeurs communes (laïcité), en faisant apparaître enfin que nos sociétés se reconnaissent sur des valeurs partagées, condensées et solennellement proclamées dans les chartes des droits de l'homme." Valadier, *Inévitable Morale*, 209.

[435] Cf. Paul Valadier, "Has the Concept of *Sensus Fidelium* Fallen into Desuetude?," in *Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church: The Plenary Papers from the First Cross-cultural Conference on Catholic Theological Ethics* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 187–192. Valadier presents as an example of the model of church discussion the elaboration of the documents of the U.S. bishops in the 1980s.

[436] Cf. Valadier, *Agir en politique*, 68.

[437] Cf. Valadier, *L'Église en procès*, 142.

Jürgen Habermas as a possible framework for this discussion.[438] However, Valadier's understanding of the discussion, especially in his first works, is rather Kantian. He ultimately tries to identify common universal ethical principles.[439] The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is an example of this. Therefore, although Valadier's view seems to move toward a discussion among religious traditions in pluralistic societies, he never considers the possibility of building the intercultural argumentation on religious grounds. Moreover, his understanding of the role of revelation in moral life, very much limited to awakening the desire of the individual, seems to force us to argue in society only in secular terms, using an argumentation coming from the field of politics, sociology or economics.[440]

This discussion among the traditions present in society is necessary, first of all, for the individual in order to make decisions. But this discussion is also a necessity for society. Modern societies lack overarching moral theories to turn to. Therefore, in order to give societal responses to the challenges of the contemporary globalized and changing world, societies need to constantly develop and renew a common morality for their members through discussion.[441]

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[438] Cf. Valadier, *Inévitable morale*, 58; he is also at times critical of Habermas. Cf. Valadier, *Éloge De La Conscience*, 166.

[439] Cf. Valadier, *Éloge de la conscience*, 47–48; cf. also Valadier, *Inévitable morale*, 216–217.

[440] We can appreciate here better the effort of David Tracy to make religious symbols and narratives relevant in societal issues through the concept of religious classic. Cf. Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 154.

[441] "Pour les affronter, l'État ne peut plus se contenter de décider par lui-même... Faute de telles références, il lui faut bien mobiliser les propositions éthiques et morales présentes dans la société civile. D'où la naissance et le développement des Comités éthiques qui peuvent dévoiler les enjeux des questions à résoudre et apporter

This dynamic of discussion in pluralistic societies unfolds in the many "expert committees" which have a consultative role for governments and companies. They can gather different technical, ethical and religious positions present in society in order to shed light on a particular case and to provide an ethical foundation for any possible decision.[442]

### *v. An Example of an Ethical Argument on a Social Issue*

Valadier's reflection on moral theology is highly speculative due to his major philosophical concerns. We do not find in his work many treatments of concrete and particular moral issues. However, in order to illustrate this presentation of his moral method, a good example would be his treatment of non-violence.[443] Valadier rejects a view of social ethics which demands that Christians adopt in social and political life an attitude of non-violence and a rejection of all types of aggression in order to be faithful to the Gospel. Valadier considers this attitude a renunciation of the universal scope of the Christian message, reducing it to a caricature of itself. This attitude forces Christians to abandon this world, a world which demands that we deal with the fact of violence in it, or leave it to evil. Valadier considers that true Christian identity bypasses an apparent loss of

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des suggestions aux pouvoirs politiques." Valadier, "Permanence du théologico-politique: Politique et religion, de nouvelle [donnée]," 300.

[442] "Le rôle des comités peut être d'œuvrer à mettre en discussion et à interroger les familles morales et spirituelles qui composent la nation, tâche nécessaire pour montrer de quelles valeurs est porteuse la communauté, quel prix elle leur attache... En ce sens, l'expansion des comités traduit bien une nouvelle façon pour l'État d'interroger et de prendre en compte les requêtes de la société civile." Valadier, *Inévitable morale*, 51.

[443] Cf. Valadier, *Jésus-Christ ou Dionysos*, 127–132. We should take into account that this book is one of the earliest of Paul Valadier, and so it reflects his initial positions. Over time religion and theology have assumed a larger role in his moral method. However the intuition seen here remains valid.

that identity while joining the universality of the struggle of humanity to make this world more human here and now. This can require the use of violence in some cases where justice demands it. Finally we can retrieve the true Christian identity and the Spirit of the Gospel, not in a particular form of action outside of this world, but as an inspiration shaping the rational actions of Christians who live inside the world and accept it as it is.[444]

*c) ROLE OF RELIGION IN SOCIAL LIFE*

As happens with any moral theology method related to the role of the church in society, the theological method is only the abstract expression of an actual understanding of the role of the Church in society. How, then, is the Church related to society in Valadier's thought? How does he articulate the two poles of the suggested binomial "theologico-political"? Contrary to Weber's or Gauchet's understanding of "disenchantment," Valadier asserts that this social process does not imply that religion should disappear from social life.

Valadier bases his view on what he considers the great and original Christian contribution regarding this issue: There is a pivotal distinction between Caesar and God, between states and Churches, between politics and religion.[445] Jesus' message is centered in the image of a kingdom much more important than any human kingdom, the Kingdom of God. This kingdom is already at work in history. Moreover, Jesus started a community of disciples, different from any political community, which tries to live, following the values

[444] "C'est alors accepter de quitter sa singularité et, apparemment la perdre, pour se retrouver alors au coude à coude avec les autres hommes dans la difficile recherche de l'universel ici et maintenant." Ibid., 130.

[445] This main insight of Christian Scripture is traditionally identified with the passage Mt 22:15-22. Valadier asserts that although this is a major Christian insight, the Church found it difficult throughout history to fully believe in it. Cf. Valadier, *Détresse du politique, force du religieux*, 192ff.

of the Kingdom of God. This community is the Church. Jesus' message does not abolish the need for political organization in human communities. The political organization is relativized simply because something more essential, the Kingdom of God, is present in history. Therefore, the religious community and the political community exist together and are invited to collaborate. The members of the Church at the same time participate in the common life of humanity and live in such a way that they follow particular values.[446] The articulation of these two communities is never fully fixed and the effort to clarify their relationship becomes stimulating for both Church and politics.[447]

In reality, how does this articulation proceed? Valadier considers first of all that the Second Vatican Council supposes an integration by the Catholic Church of the positive elements of the secularization process and the separation of Church and state. However, this integration supposes a right understanding of the autonomy of politics and social life which gives its proper role to religion in society.[448] Moreover, for Valadier contemporary politics is particularly in need of religion because of its present fragility.[449] Modern states are confronted with many new ethical issues that they cannot resolve with their resources

[446] Cf. Ibid., 186ff. Valadier explicity admits that his inspiration is drawn from Gaston Fessard and his distinction between three levels of history; "Quelle que soit la forme prise par une telle particularité dans l'existence historique: Livre de l'Encyclopédie pour le Savoir Absolu de l'hégélien... Église pour les chrétiens, etc., elle ne pourra remplir son rôle médiateur qu'à condition d'être, d'une part ouverte sur l'histoire universelle et de l'englober au point d'en rendre déjà présente la Fin, d'autre part de pénétrer la singularité de l'individu au point de pouvoir, en chaque hic et nunc, orienter et diriger ses pensées et sa liberté vers le Centre des temps et l'Absolu de Sens qui s'y révèle." Gaston Fessard, *La dialectique des exercices spirituels de Saint Ignace de Loyola: Symbolisme et historicité*, vol. 3 (Paris: Lethielleux, 1984), 471.

[447] Cf. Valadier, *La morale sort de l'ombre*, 371.

[448] Cf. Valadier, *L'Église en procès*, 25ff.

[449] Valadier, drawing from Machiavelli, sees democracy and politics in general as an essentially fragile reality. Cf. Valadier, *Machiavel et la fragilité du politique*, 116–117.

alone. Therefore states are in need of asking for new ethical insights from the different ethical and religious traditions present in society.[450] In many cases, this contribution of religion to society will proceed through the discussion hosted by the "expert committees" we have already mentioned.

Moreover, lacking an overarching moral view of things, the state needs to mobilize citizens by addressing their own convictions and beliefs in order to engage them in public life.[451] Not only does politics need to take into account the formal convictions of the citizens, the political also needs the spiritual dimension that comes from religion. Just as a spirituality detached from social reality does not reflect the mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ,[452] politics without spirituality will become a mere technocracy which aspires to rule the whole life of the individuals.[453] The freedom and strength of the spiritual dimension that comes from religion, in particular from Christianity, helps to prevent politics from being reduced to technocracy. There is a tendency in politics to believe that humans can control technically all dimensions of society. Religions – Valadier speaks also of spirituality – remind the politician of the non-controllable mystery behind reality. Moreover, religions remind the politician that his point of view is higher than the technical one, he is ultimately responsible for choosing, between the different technical possibilities,

[450] Cf. Valadier, "Permanence du théologico-politique: Politique et religion, de nouvelle [donnée]," 299.

[451] Cf. Ibid.

[452] Cf. Valadier, *Du spirituel en politique*, 70ff.

[453] Cf. Ibid., 38ff.

the one which is best for the wellbeing of society.[454] What is more, politics should acknowledge that the spiritual dimension is the only resource that can mobilize some of the deepest layers of human creativity and engagement. Only religions can mobilize in us values such as forgiveness, self-sacrifice, or hope.[455]

Valadier has always defended a major role for the Church, and for religions, in society. But in his works written after 1990 this role of religions and the Church is even more explicit and central. The reason for this relates to the historical processes that occurred through his career. These processes have caused him to emphasize even more this position. Valadier himself speaks of a major historical change in the role of religions in society that occurred after the fall of the Berlin Wall.[456] The disappearance of the Marxist regimes, which were considered major adversaries of religion, as well as the growing liberal globalization process, has major consequences at a spiritual level. Religions feel that they have now a larger role to play in society at a world level and they also feel the challenge of liberal relativism. This has brought Valadier to develop his own views into accordance with these global changes.

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[454] Cf. Ibid., 46–48.

[455] "Le 'souci de l'âme' ou la vie spirituelle n'est pas seulement la condition de vitalité d'une société ou d'une civilisation. Ce souci donne énergie personnelle et collective pour assumer sa vocation humaine dans la cité." Ibid., 100.

[456] Although Valadier has always been pleading for a more positive approach to religion for French laïcité, his writings from the end of the 90's show a clearer consciousness of the role of religion. "Il est clair que des transformations aussi fondamentales, tant l'effondrement du marxisme-léninisme que la mondialisation, ne peuvent se produire en laissant la sphère religieuse indemne. Car si la géopolitique, l'économie et le social sont concernées, comment pourrait-on ignorer le retentissement intellectuel et spirituel de tels phénomènes?" Valadier, *Un christianisme d'avenir*, 9.

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We have seen, thus, how Valadier's thought on the theologico-political supposes three elements. First, a perception of the particular social context, in Valadier's case contemporary French pluralistic society. Second, a moral theology method through which Valadier seeks to address the various ethical quandaries that such a society poses. Third, an understanding of the role of the Church in society that is implicitly supposed in this particular method of moral theology. This explanation shows us the articulation Valadier proposes for the theologico-political, his view on the Church-society relationship, in our pluralistic and disenchanted western societies. A revealing formula to express Valadier's articulation of the Church and society is the one he uses as the subtitle of his book *La Condition Chrétienne*. As an explanation of this Christian condition, Valadier speaks of the Christian as being "from the world without belonging to it" (*Du monde sans en être).*

After this very brief presentation of Paul Valadier's thought on the Church-society relationship as it has unfolded throughout his very prolific career, it is now time to approach it in a more critical way.

## III. AN EVALUATION OF PAUL VALADIER IN THE LIGHT OF PUBLIC THEOLOGY

I will now evaluate Valadier's thought in light of the public theology current as we have studied it in the previous chapter. By doing so, I hope to identify the insights that these two positions can offer to each other. Public theology is the perspective we are adopting in this dissertation and will become a lens through which to read Paul Valadier's work. After the evaluation of Valadier's position, I will briefly present that of David Tracy in order to see

more clearly the remarks previously made. Finally I will present two examples of moral arguments in order to see how they have been undertaken by Paul Valadier and by one U.S. public theologian.

As this comparison will show, my thesis is, first, that Paul Valadier can be considered a public theologian even if he does not use this terminology. In this sense Valadier's anthropology, based on conscience and freedom, is a very robust one and very suitable for the modern view of the human being. Second, that his method of mediating revelation and social reality may not offer a clear way to speak theologically on social issues. Finally, we can see a certain complementarity between Valadier's understanding of the theologico-political and Tracy's critical-correlational paradigm of public theology. Tracy offers us a very interesting method of mediating religious symbols and stories with social reality and Valadier offers us a robust anthropological framework.

### *1.* PAUL VALADIER, A PUBLIC THEOLOGIAN *AVANT LA LETTRE*

We can expect that Paul Valadier would reject in a first moment the idea of a public theology. He would reject it on the basis of what he calls "the temptation of supernaturalism," the constant temptation of the religious approach to impose religious categories upon secular realities.[457] When referring to the use of Scripture, this temptation of supernaturalism supposes that we consider the Bible as a list of advice and precepts that

[457] "Et nous n'avons pas cessé ici de nous élever contre le surnaturalisme qui croit rendre l'Évangile efficace en le projetant immédiatement en impératifs." Valadier, *Agir en politique*, 184; also cf. Valadier, *Un christianisme d'avenir*, 164.

we should follow to manage our own lives.[458] However, when looking closely to the goals and methods of public theology, this suspicion about the role of theology and religious symbols may disappear and the similarities with Valadier's project would soon become evident. I believe this suspicion reveals a certain unconscious reflex against an explicit religious discourse produced by the influence of historical radical interpretations of laicity in the French culture.[459]

At the level of what I have called "public theology as a style," public theology is, in Breitenberg's words, "theologically informed public discourse about public issues."[460] In spite of his reluctance, Paul Valadier is a public theologian in this broad sense because of his continuous concern for putting Christian faith and social realities in dialogue with each other, for articulating the theologico-political.[461] Although the theological categories have been there from the beginning, their influence has become more evident in Valadier since the 1990s. As a good example of Paul Valadier functioning as a public theologian, it is enough to consider the argument he defends in a chapter of his book *Détresse du Politique, Force du Religieux.* In this chapter Valadier asserts that the way original sin is implicitly or

[458] Valadier uses the image of using the Bible as Mao's Red Book. Cf. Valadier, *La condition chrétienne*, 80.

[459] Valadier phrases somehow this intuition in a comment at the opening of one of his books: "La laïcité à la française a d'ailleurs créé en nous des réflexes qui repoussent quasi instinctivement de tels mélanges impurs." Valadier, *Du spirituel en politique*, 8.

[460] Breitenberg, "To tell the truth: Will the real public theology please stand up?," 55; or even in broader terms: "[A]n effort to interpret the life of a people in the light of a transcendent reference." Marty, *The Public Church: Mainline-Evangelical-Catholic*, 16.

[461] Already one of his first books, dealing with the ethics of political life, included a whole section on the relationship between Christian faith and political life. Cf. Valadier, *Agir en politique*, 155ff.

explicitly understood is the main trait that distinguishes different political philosophies.[462] This supposition conceives theology as having a quite important role in social issues. Even more, the term public theology coincides with Valadier's self-definition of his theology. In his book *La Condition Chrétienne,* he speaks of two "figures" or attitudes through which we can live our faith. These two figures, present throughout the history of Christianity, are: the "breaking off" figure (*figure de rupture)* and the "attestation" figure (*figure de attestation)*. This second attestation figure implies "the stress… to give witness of the Word in the world, therefore to insert Christian life in the structures of the world worried about being intelligible for the world."[463] Paul Valadier considers his own theology an example of this attestation figure. Our understanding of public theology and its goals is very similar to this attestation figure. Therefore, it is fair to say that Valadier is doing theology in a public theology style.

### *a) His Contribution to Public Theology*

From his own original approach to social issues, Paul Valadier's thought may make important contributions to public theology. These contributions are the fruit of his effort to address the challenges posed by the highly secularized –indeed disenchanted—society in which he is thinking. Valadier is deeply engaged in fully honoring the complexity of reality in his thought. He gives us, thus, a privileged expression of the social and cultural situation

[462] "Plus qu'on le croit généralement, nombre de nos approches théoriques et pratiques du politique découlent d'une certaine théologie du péché: celle qui précisément pense la subordination et la violence légitime comme conséquence de l'insubordination des hommes à Dieu, donc du péché." Valadier, *Détresse du politique, force du religieux*, 236.

[463] Valadier, *La condition chrétienne*, 23.

in which we do theology. Taking this situation into account in our reflection helps us understand the demands that such a secularized society poses on any discourse coming from a religious background in order to be heard and accepted. This perspective takes the form of a high concern for a philosophical base to his thought and the dialogue with contemporary philosophical currents.

Therefore three main traits of Paul Valadier's work are main contributions to public theology: his more complex and problematized understanding of pluralism, a style that integrates the possibility of conflict, and the anthropological framework he offers us to root public theology.

### *i. A More Complex and Nuanced Understanding of Pluralism*

Valadier shares with public theologians a positive understanding of the pluralism of modern societies, for him pluralism is the natural effect of the process of differentiation of knowledge that is at the root of a healthy secularization. We have seen that Valadier even considers it a necessary characteristic of modern democracies. This view is similar to the one held by David Tracy and other Catholic authors in the same line.[464] However, Valadier introduces a more detailed approach to actual pluralism as it exists in a particular society, the French one. In this sense we can say that Valadier pays more attention to history and its circumstances when developing his theological approach.

[464] "For those like the present author who accept pluralism as a fundamental enrichment of the human condition..." Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, xi.

We have already noted how Paul Valadier identifies some negative traits in the way pluralism exists in France (Manichaeism, cultural prejudice against religion and the Catholic Church in particular). These negative traits are, in many cases, an expression of a misguided secularist understanding of society and are a product of conditions which are the product of its history. The consideration of these nuances does not lead us to adopt a negative approach to pluralism, but a more realistic one which includes the ambiguities of real life.

Valadier's attention to the actual conditions and limitations of French society's pluralism, may seems to suggest that Valadier's approach is a pessimistic one. Valadier's pessimism would be opposed to a higher optimism in other authors writing theology in public. However this opposition is false. Valadier's understanding of the complexity of pluralism reflects perfectly the Johannine theological understanding of the category the "world." The world is ultimately good because it is God's creation, but at the same time it is ambiguous in its concretions. This view not only goes beyond the opposition between pessimism and optimism, but it is the position which a major public theology author such as DavidTracy himself takes.[465]

The different approach to pluralism of Paul Valadier and the authors around public theology can be easily explained. The basic meaning of pluralism is the same everywhere: the absence of an overarching interpretation of reality and life. However, the way it

[465] "The vision of the 'world' portrayed in John includes both profound trust in and loyalty to that world as God's creation and, at the same time, real distrust in that world expressed in denunciation, even in flight from it." Ibid., 48.

becomes concrete in the different societies makes all the difference and determines the way we can address that society with our discourse. France's pluralism, as Valadier describes it, is very different from that of the US. In the U.S. pluralism is seen as a main point of the societal and political imagery. In France there is a more negative consideration of pluralism. It is not a problem of pluralism being foreign to French culture. Pluralism has been present in France in some degree since the Protestant Reformation. The reason for the more negative view is the fear of religions being a cause of conflict in society which springs from the experience of the Wars of Religion during the sixteenth century. Because of this fear, the tendency in France since the French Revolution has been to reduce plural options and beliefs to private life and to unify the public sphere in the political dimension. As we mentioned in the introduction, this more negative vision of religion is also a product of the more intense influence of what we called Second Enlightenment in Europe than in the U.S.. Moreover, the present immigration phenomenon in France and Europe may amplify and favor this conflictive perception of pluralism.

A discourse addressed to the pluralistic French society should be shaped by this different experience of pluralism. On the one hand, it should claim the need of an accurate understanding of secularization that avoids a secularist imposition; and, on the other hand, it should offer a more nuanced and discreet argumentation to avoid a strong rejection. Spain's pluralism is also particular. Its main trait is that it has appeared suddenly and in sharp contradiction to many traits of a supposed Spanish identity. This makes it particularly difficult to assume. These circumstances will determine the conditions of the discourse we can address to society. We will have the occasion to revisit this dynamic in a later chapter.

*ii. A Style that Integrates Conflict.*

A very clear consequence of this more nuanced understanding of pluralism in function of France's history and society is the particular style that Valadier identifies at times as his own. Although the work of Valadier can be located within this broad sense of public theology as a style, an important and revealing nuance can be introduced here. As seen in our previous chapter, the consideration of public theology as a style reflects the similarities of this approach to John O'Malley's understanding of the spirit of the Council. For O'Malley the Second Vatican Council's documents are inspired by a style close to what he calls the humanistic panegyric style. This style attempts to present an idealized view of something in order to move the reader towards that idea.[466] Paul Valadier is clearly in the Council line which seeks for a more positive approach of the Church to the world, we have already situated him in the line of the post-Vatican II revisionist movement in moral theology. However, the particularity of the context in which Valadier works, namely the secularized French cultural milieu, includes a negative bias against religion. This circumstance forces Valadier to have a more polemical approach to society which drifts apart from the idea of a panegyric style. This is well reflected in several assertions where he makes reference to another literary style; the judiciary process.

This idea of the judiciary process style is the central point of his book *L'Église en Procès.* In the foreword of this book, Valadier affirms that the four Gospels can be understood as a long juridical process affecting Jesus Christ that reaches his climax in the

[466] Cf. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, 47.

passion narratives.[467] This same juridical genre, Valadier asserts, may reflect the relationship of Christianity with the world.[468] Valadier points out how the Evangelists seem to assume that the coming of the Messiah necessarily supposes conflict, debates and accusation until he is put to death and the Father resurrects him.[469] This dynamic fits very well with the idea of a judiciary process. A judiciary process supposes that something has been broken in a relationship and should be repaired. Therefore, the process implies opposition, and so it seems to be contrary to the positive approach to society that the Council proposed. However, at bottom a judiciary process ultimately is an act of faith in dialogue because it assumes that there is a common basis which allows argumentation and discussion which the process requires.[470] As O'Malley affirms[471] any style supposes an understanding of our own identity, the identity of the other and our common relationship. Valadier's judiciary process implies an understanding of the Church as necessarily in dialogue with the other in order to understand itself.[472]

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[467] "L'ensemble de leur contenu est organisé en une sorte de vaste procès dont le déroulement commence bien avant les actes de procédures proprement dits qui conduisent Jésus à comparaître devant Hérode et Pilate." Valadier, *L'Église en procès*, 7.

[468] "[L]e rapport du christianisme avec le monde, et ceci dès l'origine, sous la forme d'une contestation juridique." Ibid., 8.

[469] Cf. Ibid., 7.

[470] Cf. Ibid., 8.

[471] Cf. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, 49.

[472] This idea of the need of Christian faith for the dialogue with opposite positions is present throughout Valadier's entire work. "[L]a foi chrétienne se perd dans l'insignifiance à ne pas rencontrer l'autre, mais, d'autre part, qu'elle a quelque chance de trouver son identité, sa force et sa fermeté dans cette rencontre même." Valadier, *Jésus-Christ ou Dionysos*, 18.

This idea of theology as a judiciary process, which reflects very well Valadier's efforts to present Christianity in a way that answers secular objections is, thus, the particular style that reflects Valadier's work. Remaining inside the more open inspiration of the Second Vatican Council and of a public theology style, Valadier has developed some nuances to this approach reflecting the context in which he writes. The experience of a more conflictual relationship between Church and society gives Valadier's discourse its more specific characteristics. This same nuance of Valadier's style should be present in a public theology developed in Europe. However, juridical process style should not mean a polemic approach to society, but it supposes a responsibility for the church. On one hand, a public theology in Europe should include an enhanced sense of the Church's accountability to society for the intelligibility of the arguments and symbols used in our public discourse. On the other hand, it should also recall society's accountability to the Church for the reasonability of its claims in keeping certain dimensions of life outside religious influence.

### *iii. An Anthropology Based on Decision*

The major contribution that Valadier can make to our public theology effort is based on his concern to offer a rigorous Christian discourse which can answer the objections coming from a secularized society. Valadier gives us a sound and rigorous individual and social anthropology, based on the tradition of moral theology,[473] which tries to face the challenges of modern thinking. This anthropology, which is not so fully developed in the public theology current, helps us to root our reflection in a concrete and modern view of the

[473] Valadier speaks at one point of the Christian moral tradition as a mediation between religion and politics. Cf. Valadier, *La Morale sort de l'ombre*, 376.

human being. Valadier's anthropology will bring to the fore questions like the role of freedom, the place of conscience, or the articulation of human groups. This more concrete and philosophical anthropology yields valuable insights on social life. One major insight concerns the awareness of the need to focus on decision as the ultimate concern of any public theology reflection. Another one is the need to suggest social spaces where we can locate the public theology argument. Valadier's understanding of the role of expert committees is particularly insightful in this sense.

In the line of the 20th-century revisionist movement in Catholic moral theology, Valadier's view on human being is very much focused on freedom as a core aspect of what human beings are. Freedom is ultimately the act of choosing to be obliged by certain obligations in order to respect and build humanity in ourselves and the other.[474] Freedom supposes conscience as the self-reflection on the maxim that will guide our action.[475] Freedom is thus exercised through decision which is always concrete and historically conditioned.[476] Decision is then reached in a particular set of circumstances, which obliges us to consider technical, political and ethical elements of that setting.[477] This is an expression of the limits of human existence.[478] Decision should also be rooted in the human

[474] "La liberté est alors ce geste par lequel on choisit de se vouloir obligé ou tenu par des obligations grâce auxquelles on honore ensoi et en autrui son humanité." Valadier, *Éloge de la conscience*, 157; cf. Valadier, *Agir en politique*, 117.

[475] Cf. Valadier, *Éloge de la conscience*, 48.

[476] Cf. Valadier, *Agir en politique*, 26.

[477] Cf. Ibid., 47.

[478] Cf. Ibid., 146.

being at a deeper level than mere rationality; it should be moved by desire in order to really move the person.[479]

Because of the complexity of reality and different elements that should be taken into account in every decision, we should realize that human life supposes discussion. Valadier understands discussion as sharing and mutual enlightening of the different points of view to overcome their blindness.[480] It is only through this discussion that confronts our opinion that we can open ourselves to the universal.[481] Although Valadier makes reference to the need to recover the value of the symbol and of the religious symbolic universe for reason,[482] he does not fully develop these insights. Valadier ultimately considers critical discussion mainly a search for the universal and does not offer a concrete way to integrate religious symbols in this search. It seems then that the social discussion should be developed in secular terms.

But Valadier's anthropology also develops the social dimension of man. Valadier sees this dimension as springing from the role of language in human life. Humans can only grow and become adults through the use of a received language that puts them in communication with other humans.[483] Language allows the person to receive and integrate the symbolic worlds that shape a culture and structure relationships. These worlds of relationships will be

[479] Cf. Valadier, *Éloge de la conscience*, 155.

[480] Cf. Valadier, *Agir en politique*, 103.

[481] Cf. Ibid., 108.

[482] Cf. Valadier, *L'Église en procès*, 90; cf. Valadier, *Détresse du politique, force du religieux*, 138ff.

[483] Cf. Valadier, *Agir en politique*, 137.

the most immediate level of a society – what we call civil society. The political level and the state will be a narrower second level of human sociability.[484] In this social dimension of human life the conditions of interpersonal relationships are not enough, but humans need long mediations in the form of institutions, in order to act upon and influence this level.[485]

The social dimension of Valadier's anthropology influences also his understanding of conscience. Valadier articulates the role of the individual conscience with the inputs it receives from the community.[486] Conscience and reason are based on a prior received tradition, which includes a particular symbolic view of life. Conscience is not bound by this tradition, but it can react to it critically. Conscience is social also because it is constantly formed and awakened through the guidance it may receive from the community. The disenchanted and pluralistic society may also be a source of guidance for conscience when, through the dialogue of the different traditions, it achieves new insight on life.[487] It is curious how Valadier, unconsciously, seems to be tracing a path to proceed from the sharing and discussion in theological terms, the goal of public theology, to the actual personal decision of the individual.

[484] Cf. Valadier, *Inévitable morale*, 155.

[485] Cf. Valadier, *Agir en politique*, 137.

[486] Cf. Valadier, *Éloge de la conscience*, 35ff.

[487] Cf. Ibid., 164–166.

### *b) A Limit: The Category of Mediation in Paul valadier*

But in order to evaluate Paul Valadier's thought on the theologico-political we should also approach it from a very important perspective: the way it articulates the category of mediation. We have seen in the previous chapter how the category of mediation is key in a public theology which wants to speak theologically on social issues, therefore, it is necessary now to approach Valadier's thought from this category. We will see how we can identify here a weakness of his position.

#### *i. The Category of Mediation*

The category of mediation is a major one in Catholic theology. God's plans for humans are mediated through elements of the human life: human reason, the community of the church, or others.[488] In the case of the authors doing theology in public, the major aspect of this category of mediation is mediation between religious symbols and social realities.[489] Because public theology arose in the theological context of the Reformation, which is shaped by the Protestant motif of the three *solas* (*sola fide, sola gratia, sola Scriptura)* the religious dimension of the discourse we address to the public sphere has been its main

[488] Cf. Julio L. Martínez, *"Consenso público" y moral social: Las relaciones entre catolicismo y liberalismo en la obra de John Courtney Murray, S.J.* (Madrid: Univ Pontifica de Comillas, 2002), 499. In his synthesis of moral theology, Charles Curran defines mediation as "the fact that the divine is mediated in and through the human and the natural… The created, the natural, and the human are not evil but basically good and contain within themselves a reflection of their Creator." He considers it, together with the hierarchical structure, one of the main traits of Roman Catholicism, cf. Charles E. Curran, *The Catholic Moral Tradition Today: A Synthesis* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1999), 10.

[489] Cf. Martínez, *"Consenso público" y moral social*, 501.

concern.[490] The Catholic authors who have worked in this line of bringing theology in public have been sensitive to this concern, reinterpreting it inside the Catholic tradition. In contrast to other approaches, the Catholic approach to public theology stresses a more organic relationship between these two poles: theology and society.[491] This more organic view supposes a mediation between the Christian symbols and the social reality so that the inspiring message of the symbol and the integrity and complexity of human society are articulated.[492] This issue of the identity of the message and the mediation of the symbols is particularly important for the goal of this dissertation. A well understood mediation ultimately allows for a more positive understanding of the place of the Church in society as Spanish society is demanding.

So the challenge present in public theology is how to articulate God's Revelation and social reality. Especially in its Catholic variant, the effort is to allow the Christian mystery to speak and challenge our social life while at the same time respecting the integral coherence and complexity of social reality.

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[490] Among the authors we studied in the previous chapter this is particularly clear, for example, in Ronald Thiemann's work which starts the public theology reflection from Biblical narratives and from the practices of the Christian community. Cf. Thiemann, *Constructing a Public Theology*, 19.

[491] We have also seen how in the U.S. Catholic milieu a particular method has been associated with public theology: the paradigm of David Tracy's critical correlation. Other approaches would be Ronald Thiemann's view of ad hoc alliances between religious symbols and social realities or Robert Benne's paradoxical relationship between the two poles. Cf. Thiemann, *Constructing a Public Theology*; and Benne, *The Paradoxical Vision*.

[492] This goal was already pointed out in the first reflections on a Catholic public theology that appeared in the U.S. context. "A public theology which addresses social issues in the symbolically rich language of Christian religion has great power to stimulate commitment and motivate action." Hollenbach, "Editor's Conclusion: A Fundamental Political Theology," 713.

### *ii. Valadier's Method of Mediation*

Paul Valadier supposes an original method of putting into practice the intuition of a theologically informed discourse about social issues. Because Valadier has worked in a very different context and has had no explicit contact with the public theology movement, his method supposes a different approach to the same issues from inside the Catholic tradition. We can consider Valadier's work as a theology written in a public theology style with a particular method of its own. The different method supposed particularly a different understanding of the mediation of revelation, as expressed in religious symbols, and social realities.

To grasp Valadier's understanding of the category of mediation we should realize that a major inspiration behind his thought is the work of the French Jesuit Gaston Fessard, particularly his interpretation of Christianity through Hegelian categories. Fessard developed this view particularly in a large three-volume commentary on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola.[493] In this work, Fessard asserts that Ignatius does not consider any distinction between nature and grace, between nature and the supernatural, outside the concrete situation of the human being. The tension of the poles of God and human being is resolved in the here-and-now of human freedom answering the call of

[493] Gaston Fessard, *La dialectique des exercices spirituels de Saint Ignace de Loyola*, vol. 1, 3 vols. (Paris: Aubier, 1956); *La dialectique des exercices spirituels de Saint Ignace de Loyola: Fondement, péché, orthodoxie*, vol. 2 (Paris: Aubier, 1966); *La dialectique des exercices spirituels de Saint Ignace de Loyola: Symbolisme et historicité*, vol. 3 (Paris : Lethielleux, 1984).

God.[494] Valadier would reflect this view in the field of moral theology, for him the influence of revelation on the human being will be limited to the level of his freedom.

When looking for the way Paul Valadier mediates revelation and social reality we have to consider his main synthesis of moral theology, the book *La Condition Chrétienne.* This is the book where Valadier has developed most extensively the theological dimension of his thought. Revelation, expressed in the major religious symbol which is Scripture, has in Paul Valadier a meta-ethical role.[495] This means that Scripture does not furnish us with moral codes or precepts, but merely awakens in us a desire,[496] a desire to consider our life as a gift and respond to it in gratitude.[497] Once the desire is awakened, then the person will have a larger ethical creativity in order to look for new means and answers, from among the humane ethical resources, to the particular challenges of his time.[498] Valadier uses Karl

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[494] "Mais son intelligence se refuse à spéculer sur la distinction de ces deux ordres, hors de toute référence à sa situation concrète. A ses yeux, il y a le moi de l'homme, son propre ego, face à la Majesté divine, et, entre eux, un monde créé uniquement pour que ce moi y perçoive la présence d'une Liberté souveraine l'appelant à son service pour lui rendre en tout et par toutes choses 'la plus grande gloire et louange'." Fessard, *La dialectique des exercices spirituels de Saint Ignace de Loyola*, 1:354.

[495] "Nous parlerons donc d'un rôle méta-moral des Écritures (ou de la foi qu'elles suscitent, entretiennent et structurent), car elles mettent essentiellement devant Dieu, son désir pour l'humanité et son appel à y répondre." Valadier, *La condition chrétienne*, 82; "Méta-morale en ce sens, la parabole fait beaucoup plus que de fournir des consignes; elle se situe au niveau fondamental de suscitation du désir." Ibid., 91.

[496] "Aucune expérience chrétienne n'est possible si elle n'est pas l'objet d'un désir, et un tel désir ne peut être éveillé que s'il a été suscité par une Parole entendue qui le provoque." Valadier, *La condition chrétienne*, 55.

[497] "Ce qui est découvert en effet, c'est qu'une parole vous signifie un désir qui était déjà là, mais comme non perçu, celui d'un désir qui appelle gratuitement et sans raison énonçable à considérer sa vie comme un don." Ibid., 59.

[498] "[L]'optique évangélique pose les conditions d'une inventivité morale féconde dans la diversité des âges et des cultures... Une telle puissance de renouvellement montre bien que le message est moins un contenu bien déterminé qu'une interpellation permanente à des libertés en situation pour qu'elles trouvent elles-mêmes les voies neuves de l'engagement." Ibid., 95.

Rahner's distinction between transcendental and categorical[499] to illustrate this. In Valadier's thought, Scripture influences us at a transcendental level, producing a change in our freedom. At the categorical level we have to look for answers, to the moral problems among the common human resources.

### *iii. Evaluation*

The mediation between the symbols of the Christian mystery and social realities for Valadier is, therefore, accomplished in the inner self of the believer through the awakening of the desire, a desire that then moves freedom. The particular choices that the person will make will depend on human reason and understanding of reality. This method of mediation supposes that Scripture, a main element of the Christian message has a small influence in social reality. It supposes also that the political, sociological and economic circumstances of reality and society determine the conditions in which the Gospel can speak. This way the specificity of the Christian message risks being blurred. Also in this view possible creative resources coming from religious symbols are neglected. Moreover, the prophetic voice which springs from Christian faith, a voice able to challenge unjust social paradigms which are considered unmovable, may be tamed.

In summary, Valadier represents a quite concrete and clear proposal of individual and social ethics. Moreover, he unconsciously helps us to root the great insight of public

[499] "Sans doute pourrait-on retrouver ici la distinction du théologien Karl Rahner entre le catégorial et le transcendantal. Distinction féconde et libératrice, qui tente de formaliser le rapport de Dieu à l'homme, en honorant le régime moderne de la subjectivité et de la liberté." Ibid., 69; for the original words of Rahner on this cf. for example Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 14ff.

theology, the effort to speak on social issues from religious symbols and narratives, in a concrete and original view of human beings and their actions in society. However, when compared to the critical-correlational method for a public theology, we find that Valadier's method does not integrate as well this main insight of the religious dimension of public discourse.

### 2. DIFFERENCES WITH DAVID TRACY

In order to see the role that Valadier's thought can play in the public theology we are proposing for Spain, I will now briefly present in comparison the position of the public theology current. When presenting this position I am going to limit my reflections to David Tracy's thought.[500] When using his thought as representative of a Catholic public theology my thesis is that there is a sufficient coherence between Catholic authors around the term public theology and David Tracy's theoretical model. This coherence allows us to see them as a whole.

#### *a) THE VALUE OF PAUL VALADIER'S CONTRIBUTION*

First of all, we should point out how the three contributions from Paul Valadier that we mentioned before are significant improvements for public theology: the more historically sensitive understanding of pluralism, the incorporation of a more conflictual way to argue, as well as the anthropological framework rooted in conscience suppose important points to incorporate into a public theology argument.

[500] So influential is the work of David Tracy in the U.S. context that Curran asserts that Tracy's idea of an "analogical imagination" is another way of expressing the category of mediation. Cf. Curran, *The Catholic Moral Tradition Today*, 10.

Regarding the understanding of pluralism, although Tracy suggests at some point the challenges and ambiguities of the present situation of pluralism,[501] in general Tracy, as well as the other authors in this trend, do not much develop the risks and dangers of pluralism. This fact may reflect a view on pluralism very much centered in the U.S experience where it is more peacefully integrated. However, this influence of the societal and historical context in the theological discourse is fully coherent with Tracy's understanding of how the situation determines the work of the theologian.[502]

Secondly, regarding Valadier's integration of conflict in his style of theology, it can help develop some elements that are already present in Tracy but that are not fully unfolded. Tracy considers the possibility of a conversation marked by conflict in his analogical imagination.[503] He affirms that there is no problem in having a conflict when the subject matter of the conversation rules it. However, these reflection are not really developed.

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[501] "A simple affirmation of pluralism can mask a repressive tolerance where all is allowed because nothing finally is taken seriously. Or pluralism can cover a genial confusion." Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, xi; also cf. Ibid., 342; Cf. Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity*, 90; to see an example in another author of this current, cf. Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 17ff.

[502] "Any cultural critic possesses some combination of all these orientating discernments formed by a preunderstanding both individual and traditional, conditioned by the social, political and economic realities of a particular society... The theologian's own interpretation of the Christ event and the complex tradition mediating it, to be sure, is also conditioned by and partly determined by the same "macro" and "micro" conditions, the same cultural situation which encompasses all." Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 343.

[503] Cf. Ibid., 178 note 1.

Finally, in similar terms, the anthropology behind public theology, in its particular critical-correlation paradigm, is not as highly developed as it is in Valadier.[504] Human beings, because historical and limited, are conversational beings whose understanding of anything is dependant upon language and conversation.[505] This view of understanding through conversation applies also to our contact with texts and works of art of a culture with which we develop a kind of conversation.[506] This view of human understanding shows us that human beings live in traditions given by communities. These traditions give us two things: First, the pre-understanding necessary to approach the work of art;[507] and second, the relative adequacy criteria to evaluate our interpretation of the event. Our interpretation should, thus, be validated by a community.[508]

As we see Tracy's anthropological framework is interesting and suggestive. However, the moral theology approach that we are taking in our work always supposes a practical concern. Although a deep understanding of the way people approach and interpret religious symbols is a major asset, it is insufficient. Our ultimate concern as moral theologians does not remain in the interpretation of the symbol. Our ultimate concern is to persuade people

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[504] Tracy's anthropology is clearly inspired by Gadamer, although taking something also from Paul Ricoeur, as Tracy himself asserts. For example cf. Ibid., 135 note 8.

[505] "For understanding happens; it occurs not as the pure result of personal achievement but in the back-and-forth movement of the conversation itself." Ibid., 101.

[506] Cf. Ibid., 102.

[507] "It is naive to assume that a thinker is so autonomous as to be no longer affected by the effects and influences of that tradition in our very language, a presence carrying us along by providing our initial prejudgments and often unconscious presuppositions as to the nature of reality." Ibid., 100.

[508] "If one's own experience has been verified by other readers, especially by the community of capable readers over the centuries, the reflective judgment should prove that much more secure." Ibid., 116.

to behave more responsibly when dealing with social issues; that is to say, to make decisions oriented toward the individual and common good. Contrary to Valadier's conscience-based position, Tracy's proposal does not include a clear way to implement it.[509]

### *b) David Tracy's Method of Mediation*

Regarding the method to mediate religious symbols and social realities, we can say that Tracy's is a more complex and elaborate one. For Tracy, in mediation there is also a dimension of encounter with the event of Jesus Christ through Christian symbols and narratives that move the desire.[510] But it also allows this encounter to be unfolded and interpreted in conversation with the actual Christian symbols in order to formulate with relative adequacy the truth conveyed by the symbols.[511] Because this truth is a public message which should be intelligible for all men and women, the influence of this mediation reaches beyond the limits of those who have faith. Through the analogical imagination, the person can put into dialogue the Christian symbols and the different human realities he is living, including social reality in which he is submerged.[512] This

[509] It is understandable why this dimension of decision is not so fully present in Tracy's thought. His approach to theology is as a fundamental theologian; therefore, he does not have the same concern for actually influencing people's actions. Nevertheless, it is fair to critique Tracy for adopting a method that is overly theoretical.

[510] Tracy identifies this dimension with faith: "Faith is, above all and prior to any articulation of specific beliefs, a matter of fundamental disposition and orientation involving the responses of both real trust and genuine loyalty to the object of faith." Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 47.

[511] Cf. Ibid., 248ff.

[512] Cf. Ibid., 405ff.

dialogue goes in both directions, from Christian symbols to the social reality and from social reality to Christian symbols. The mediation between the event of Jesus Christ, as expressed in religious symbols, and the human situation is then understood as a mutually-critical correlation between them.[513]

From the perspective of the distinction between a transcendental and categorical level that Valadier, following Rahner, points out, we can see how Tracy is reflecting with more detail the complexity of this articulation. We can identify a transcendental level in Tracy, but I believe it is articulated in such a way that Scripture has a larger role to play. Faith is ultimately a response to an event – Tracy speaks of event-gift-act-happening—the event of Jesus Christ.[514] This is situated at a transcendental level. But this contact with the event of Jesus Christ must then be interpreted. And the interpretation should be evaluated in order to see if it reflects accurately the original event.[515] Scripture, with all its richness and diversity, becomes then the criterion of adequacy of any interpretation of the event of Jesus-Christ.[516]

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[513] Cf. Ibid., 406.

[514] "Above all, any christology in any period must find some way of bringing to expression the event-gift-act-happening character of the event of Jesus Christ in a manner appropriate to both the present community's experience of the event and the content and structure of the New Testament." Ibid., 305.

[515] "All later theological and doctrinal expressions receive their fundamental appropriateness by showing their fidelity to the classical expressions of the Christian Scriptures." Ibid., 309.

[516] The comparison between Paul Valadier and David Tracy easily evokes the well known debate on the specificity of Christian ethics in the 70's. It is clear that Paul Valadier receives inspiration from Alfons Auer's autonomous ethics. He even criticizes explicitly Ratzinger's and Balthasar's ethics of faith, cf. Valadier, *La condition chrétienne*, 17–23. However, it is not easy to identify David Tracy's position in this debate because he is thinking outside the tradition of moral theology; I would identify Tracy's position with the work of the authors who offered a middle position to overcome the stalemate in the debate. Tracy may have affinities with

This more developed categorical level reveals there is a role to play for Scripture in its laterality beyond merely awakening the reader's desire; it is an adequacy criterion to judge the realizations of that desire. Tracy's understanding also allows us to grasp and formulate a truth in the symbols that can be conveyed publicly to the whole society, not only to believers. This Tracian articulation of the Christ event and Scripture is the product of his hermeneutical approach to theology. Tracy's theology is based on a particular feature he identifies in human understanding: the conversational movement of intensification-distanciation that happens every time we enter into contact with a classic work.[517]

### 3. TWO EXAMPLES

Because the present reflections have a very abstract character, I find it important to illustrate them with a pair of examples that will help us grasp the two ways to bring theology into the public sphere we have seen here. I have chosen two particular examples: the evaluation of non-violence, and the reflection on nation and citizenship. I have chosen these two because they are the ones that are present in both theologies. This makes them easier to compare.[518] These two particular reflections will allow us to develop a synthetic view on both currents. On the public theology side I will use writings from three Catholic social ethicists: David Hollenbach and the Himes brothers. The work of these ethicists,

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authors like Klaus Demmer who also takes an hermeneutical approach. For the debate on the specificity of Christian ethics, cf. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology in the Twentieth Century*, 178–183.

[517] Cf. Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 124ff.

[518] As already mentioned, Valadier has not developed very much the approach to these issues through practical cases.

inspired by David Tracy's theoretical framework, reflects how the critical-correlation paradigm addresses some further practical social issues.

*a) NON-VIOLENCE*

Valadier's reflection on non-violence is brief, inserted in a larger work which deals with a different issue: Nietzsche and the Christian faith. However it is very interesting because it addresses a topic that we have seen to be very significant in order to evaluate how Christian identity and social issues come together. We already saw the long reflection that David Hollenbach offered on these issues in his book *Nuclear Ethics*.[519]

On the one hand, as we have seen in a previous section, Valadier rejects the possibility of presenting non-violence as a characteristic trait of Christian faith. He considers it a renunciation of the universal scope of Christian faith and a withdrawal from this world that sometimes requires violence in order to defend justice. He proposes that Christian identity unfolds by working side by side with those engaged in building a better and more just world. This involvement of the Christian in the common human struggle supposes that he may have to reach decisions which involve violence if the rules of politics and society require. Nevertheless, the Christian will act in society under the inspiration of the Spirit, which should give him a particular creativity and allure.[520]

On the other hand, we already saw how David Hollenbach takes as the main focus in his reflection the central Christian mystery, the death and resurrection of Christ, and how

[519] Hollenbach, *Nuclear Ethics*.

[520] Cf. Valadier, *Jésus-Christ ou Dionysos*, 127–132.

it is lived in history in hope. The impossibility of complete coincidence between the kingdom of God and history establishes the need for accepting a plurality of answers to the question of how to put together justice and peace. On the one hand, the cross of Christ expresses the violence that must be suffered in the process of collaborating with the coming of the kingdom. This aspect is expressed by the call to non-violence as a main trait of Christian faith. On the other hand, the resurrection of Christ, God's victory over the power of sin and death, expresses the empowering of the Christian in order to fight for justice in this world. This aspect of Christian faith is expressed by the just war theory, which sets the conditions in which the Christian can engage himself in violence in order to fight for justice.[521] Hollenbach then develops the criteria of just war theory applied to nuclear war and studies the case of nuclear deterrence.

*b) CITIZENSHIP AND NATION*

Valadier has a very interesting reflection on citizenship and the nation-state in his book *Inévitable Morale* within a longer reflection on multiculturalism. It is important to notice that Valadier admits in the introduction of the book that his reflections in this work are philosophical.[522] Therefore they may lack a more theological approach which will be more present in later works.

Valadier identifies two present challenges to the idea of nation: the immigration phenomenon and the European Union project. On one hand, the contemporary immigration

[521] These reflection can be found in Hollenbach, *Nuclear Ethics*, 25–33.

[522] Cf. Valadier, *Inévitable morale*, 8.

phenomenon brings new populations to European societies. These populations come from very different cultures and practice different religions from those until now present in the societies.[523] On the other hand, the building of the European Union supposes the transfer of sovereignty from particular nations to a larger entity.[524] Both phenomena seem to call for a renewal of our understanding of what a nation is. Valadier identifies two flawed answers to this challenge: radical multiculturalism and the French republican tradition. On one hand, multiculturalism considers that any particular cultural or religious community in a society should be fully respected and that society is merely built on the constantly changing agreement of these communities.[525] On the other hand, the French republican tradition, in order to assure the unity of the nation, denies the role of particular communities. Because communities are seen as causes of division and conflict in society they should be ignored. On the contrary, society must focus only on the equal political rights of every individual as a way to homogenize the society.[526]

Valadier asserts that civil society is larger than its political dimension, and so there exists a non-political citizenship. The relationships between people pass through different dimensions: sexuality, economy, politics, friendship, etc. The way we structure all these relationships is what we call culture; it is reflected in a privileged way in language.[527] The

[523] Cf. Ibid., 134ff.

[524] Cf. Ibid., 161ff.

[525] Cf. Ibid., 142ff.

[526] Cf. Ibid., 146ff.

[527] Cf. Ibid., 163.

newcomer to a society has the challenge of appropriating this hosting culture.[528] Likewise, the different cultural groups arriving in a society should find the resources in their own culture to establish a dialogue with the hosting culture.[529] At the same time, in our contemporary rapidly changing societies, the increasing presence of these new populations will necessitate changes in the culture of the hosting societies.[530] The presence of Islam in particular might demand a change in the understanding of the role of religion in society, and, therefore, a new sense of what *laïcité* means. However, Valadier seems to believe that the concept of nation displays a sense of unity which is a recent product of the state. Under this view, the concept of nation is still valuable, and in the case of France, is a concept with a strong integrating capacity.[531] The ongoing European integration will always proceed starting from the actual national communities, enlarging them. Therefore, nations still have a role to play. Valadier proposes finally to foster the participation of the communities in society through associations and other social initiatives, as well as to develop some kind of nationality declaration for the newcomers to a society. This declaration is the way to symbolize their free will to face the process of integration in the particular ethos where they are living now, in this case France.[532]

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[528] Cf. Ibid., 163–164.

[529] Cf. Ibid., 150.

[530] Cf. Ibid., 164.

[531] Cf. Ibid., 162–163.

[532] Cf. Ibid., 160–161.

Michael and Kenneth Himes, in their book *The Fullness of Faith*, develop also a reflection on citizenship and nation state in a chapter dedicated to patriotism. It is important to recall that we considered the work of the Himes brothers as the most specifically theological approach among the authors employing the critical-correlation paradigm. This fact will help us discern more clearly the difference of approach from Paul Valadier.

Reflecting on some peculiar traits of the U.S. culture, the Himes brothers want to avoid the real risk of idolatry that is embedded in patriotism, the nation becoming an idol. The Himes brothers show how there is a movement in Scripture from a strong particularism in the Old Testament to a call for universalism in the New Testament.[533] They quote passages such as Mt 8:5; Mt 28:19a; Acts 10:9-16; Gal 3:27-28 and Rom 9-11 to show the call of Jesus to reach every man and woman regardless of their nationality.

However, the Himes brothers highlight how the Incarnation of Jesus Christ supposes that salvation passes by the particular life of a particular person in a particular time and place.[534] They quote, in this sense, passages such as Jn 14:6-7; Lk 3,1-2; Rom 3:23-25; Eph 1:9-10 and Col 1:15-20. The Himes brothers explain this in terms of the fact that the Incarnation shows us that universality should be expressed in some concrete way; this is the sacramental principle and the need for making love concrete. God's *agape* should be expressed through some human *philia.* The Himes brothers affirm that in their explicitly communitarian view, nationhood is the experience of being bound in a set of relationships

[533] Cf. Himes and Himes, *Fullness of Faith*, 126–127.

[534] Cf. Ibid., 128–130.

with a human group, of being in communion. However on a very large scale, this is what happens in a country.[535] Patriotism ultimately makes sense only as the love of the good civic qualities that exist in our particular nation. In the case of the U.S., the Himes list self-government, non-violent transfer of power, concern for rights, scientific and artistic achievements among these commendable qualities.[536] The love for these goods of our nation should motivate us to participate more fully in society through the different means that we possess: voluntary associations, public conversation, support of public institutions, paying taxes, etc.

As we readily see, in both cases Valadier is reflecting on a very solid anthropological base; this is especially evident in the example of citizenship and nation where Valadier has more space to unfold his reflections. Valadier's anthropology attempts to use the same terms which are present in philosophical debates. We see, for example, how Valadier develops his argument in the case of the nation and citizenship in order to integrate a decision in freedom. The role of the freedom of the individual is stressed through the idea of a declaration of nationality to which the individual should subscribe. In the particular examples we are considering here, the approach from public theology does not so fully develop this anthropological base. We can, however, find other reflections where this anthropological base is more fully developed

[535] Cf. Ibid., 144–145.

[536] Cf. Ibid., 155.

However, it is interesting to notice the way Hollenbach and the Himes brothers introduce religious symbols in the reflection. They do so without imposing a view on the debate, and by keeping the discussion open to rational debate. This gives their work a particular perspective, a certain freshness, which enlightens the whole reflection and opens possibilities to rational argumentation. I see this particularly in the way the reflection on the cross and resurrection in Hollenbach allows for an integration of non-violence and just war theory as two legitimate positions within Christianity. The same happens with the introduction of love and communion as two elements which can foster reflection on citizenship and nation. The insertion of these elements in reflection, not being common at all, allows us to gain a new and interesting perspective on the issue.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

The presentation of the thought of this two authors allows us to appreciate a certain complementarity between the positions of Paul Valadier and David Tracy. Valadier's contribution to a theology done in public supposes a more acute and historical appreciation of the context of pluralism, and a style adapted to it. Valadier especially offers us an anthropological framework that links the public theology effort with the decision of the individual in conscience through the resources of the moral theology tradition.

In turn, David Tracy offers us a method of mediating religious symbols and societal issues through the mutually-critical correlation between revelation and human situation. This method allows us to consider religious symbols as significant in social discussion through the concept of classic. It also allows us to conceive a discussion on social issues

between members of different religions using religious arguments. This is especially interesting in more religiously pluralistic societies like contemporary France or Spain where there are significant Muslim communities.

The position of both authors, in spite of the differences, are complementary because we can see Valadier's anthropology as the framework in which we can develop Tracy's analogical imagination. Following Tracy's understanding of theology we can interpret this complementarity as an example of how practical theologians, in this case Paul Valadier, convey the insights of systematic theology developed through analogical imagination within the the plausibility structure of a particular society, in this case a secularized society.[537]

## IV. GUIDELINES FOR A PUBLIC THEOLOGY IN SPAIN

So, what conclusions can we draw from this comparison that will assist the project of building a public theology suitable for the Spanish context? First of all comes the confirmation that public theology, in its critical-correlation paradigm, supposes a very important insight on the relationship between Church and society. This insight comes from an original question that others have just not considered: can we speak with theological arguments when addressing social issues in pluralistic societies? The question might prove too daring to pose in a European "disenchanted" society. The trend of public theology we are considering – the critical-correlational paradigm—has managed to pose the question and attempt to give it an answer inside the Catholic tradition. There are still many points to

[537] Cf. Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 6–14 and 69–79.

be clarified in the critical-correlational paradigm, but it cannot be denied that it provides a very interesting and sound method to speak publicly on social issues. This method within public theology gives us a way to draw from Christian symbols and narratives in order to build the argument, and to accomplish this in an intelligible way for every man and woman.

The more important role played by the actual symbols in the discourse is important in order to guarantee the Christian identity of the discourse. Our goal is to convey all the richness and inspiration that the symbols carry, and show their meaningfulness for sociological or political argument. This is a very important fact when we want to develop an understanding of the Church-society relationship which avoids any privatization of faith but respects its public role.

The symbols are understood as conveying a message of truth about life that is intelligible beyond the response to them in faith. This allows us to introduce them in the public debate with all due respect for the other positions and, therefore, accepting the reality of pluralism and the principles of religious freedom.

But apart from this confirmation, another important piece of guidance for our project appears in the contact with Paul Valadier's work. Any understanding of the shape and arguments of public discussion and of the way to address it from the Christian perspective cannot remain as merely an abstract reflection. It cannot just be a blueprint of an ideal society. The way we understand the form of discussion in the public sphere should reach every individual in her life and goals, and affect her choices. Because our approach to our

topic is a moral theology approach, our goal should be ultimately to address the question each one of us poses to himself: what should I do?

Paul Valadier's reflections are accomplished in a sound anthropological framework, the foundations of which lie in the tradition of moral theology. The ultimate focus of Valadier's work is the individual, who in her conscience has to decide what to do and how to act when living in a particular society. He even proposes the tradition of probabilism and the study of cases as the way to face the moral challenges posed by our pluralistic society. This retrieval of casuistry should proceed in such a way that the role of conscience is sufficiently honored. His theoretical framework accords a role to public discussion in a pluralistic society as a source of moral guidance for individual consciences. Valadier considers how the individual is influenced by society, but he also reflects on the way the individual may in turn influence society through his participation in extended social mediations. Valadier's approach may be uniquely valuable or even indispensable in order to root our reflection on a public role of theology in the individual person's life. Only in this way will public theology be engaging for people beyond merely intellectual or technical discussions.

In a similar direction, the penetrating gaze that Valadier sheds over human life and struggles shows us that we should take more thoroughly into account the nuances and tensions present in the socio-historical human situation we experience. It is not enough, thus, to affirm that a particular society is pluralistic because there are different moral and religious views present. We should pay attention to the way this pluralism came to be, which are the tensions and flaws present in it, its appreciation of the different positions

present in society, as well as the way it has developed over time. This approach does not imply a passage from a positive and hopeful understanding of pluralism to a distrustful one. On the contrary it implies that we need to penetrate the ambiguity of every reality of this world in an attempt to get to the actual goodness present in it, the "dearest freshness deep down things."[538]

In this regard, Valadier's idea of a judiciary process as a style may help us develop a proper approach to social issues from religious grounds. This approach should be equally demanding toward the religious argument and toward society. On the one hand, it should strive to answer society's claims of rigor. On the other, it should demand that society reflect a fair understanding of secularization and not fall into secularism. This assumes according an appropriate place to religion. Nevertheless, the idea of process implies that this accountability of society in the way it treats religion is also applicable to the Church. The Church is also accountable to society. The Church is responsible for facing the actual challenges of society and accepting the confrontation with new views. The Church should feel itself responsible for offering a sense of life to the men and women of this particular society.

A final important reflection concerns the way we implement the critical-correlation paradigm. It is clear that our reflections are situated in the discipline of practical theology, following Tracy's distinction of theological disciplines. John Coleman, one of the authors

[538] Gerard Manley Hopkins, "God's Grandeur," in *Gerald Manley Hopkins: A Selection of His Poems and Prose.*, ed. W.H. Gardner (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), 27.

we have reviewed, asserts it explicitly for his own work.[539] Tracy seems to suggest a rather strong distinction of disciplines between fundamental, systematic and practical theology. This distinction does not mean that they are separated.[540] However, in practice we see how the practical theology reflection and the systematic one should somehow go together in order for the critical-correlation paradigm to be coherent.[541] Therefore, we cannot speak of a systematic theology approach that may then be conveyed in the different plausibility structures through different practical theologies. This understanding of practical theology would lead us to consider Paul Valadier as just another possible way of expressing the insights coming from systematic theology alternative to public theology. The analogical imagination which put the critical correlation into practice should already be at work in the reflection of the theologian addressing actual practical and social issues. The proper integration of Valadier's valuable insights on the human being and society should always preserve the critical-correlation approach to religious symbols and narratives.

In short, the theology which addresses disenchanted societies does not have to be a disenchanted theology. A theology suitable for disenchanted societies should rather be an

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[539] "The genre of this book is practical theology. It is oriented to action, praxis and activation of the Church." Coleman, *An American Strategic Theology*, 1; in a footnote Coleman mentions explicitly Tracy's distinction of disciplines, cf. Ibid., 5 note 1.

[540] For Tracy's understanding of practical theology cf. Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 69–79; the distinction of three disciplines in theology does not intend to break the unity of theology: "Each discipline is distinct yet internally related to the other two... Theology as such remains a single discipline demanding publicness." Ibid., 55–56; the way to keep together the distinction of three disciplines and the unity of theology seems to pass through interdisciplinary work: "Theologians, therefore, in collaborative, interdisciplinary work with their colleagues, need to ask what after all is the present meaning and truth of the interpreted tradition and interpreted contemporary situation." Ibid., 81.

[541] In fact, the distinction between theological disciplines gets blurred in the later works of David Tracy. Cf. Martinez, *Confronting the Mystery of God: Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies*, 221.

inspired and fresh theology in close contact with Scripture, liturgy, theological concepts, and the life of the saints. However, it should always be a theology with a deep perception of the complexity of human reality and able to understand and address it.

# CHAPTER 3. WILL "THE OTHER" UNDERSTAND OUR PUBLIC THEOLOGY? ISLAMIC SOCIAL THINKING.

## I. INTRODUCTION

As seen in previous chapters, public theology, understood as a theological argument addressed to the public sphere,[542] is a response to the increasing moral and religious pluralism of modern societies. This presupposition of religious pluralism is basic to the enterprise of public theology. However, the actual focus of this current has been more the Christian identity of the public message of the churches than the dialogue with other religious traditions.[543] We recognize here how the origin of public theology lies in the Western debate regarding secularization. The dialogue partners of those promoting a public theology were secularist or liberal thinkers trying to reduce religion to the insignificance or to merely private life.[544]

[542] It is helpful to recall Breitenberg's definition of public theology as we have quoted it in chapter 1, section IV.1. It is probably the most accurate and comprehensive definition.

[543] "A public theology which addresses social issues in the symbolically rich language of Christian religion has great power to stimulate commitment and motivate action." Hollenbach, "Editor's Conclusion: A Fundamental Political Theology," 713; " [o]ur challenge is to develop a public theology that remains based in the particularities of the Christian faith while genuinely addressing issues of public significance. Too often, theologies that seek to address a broad secular culture lose touch with the distinctive beliefs and practices of the Christian tradition." Thiemann, *Constructing a Public Theology*, 19.

[544] From his Indian perspective Felix Wilfred affirms that "In the West we may identify three important factors for the emergence of Public Theology. First of all there is felt need to bring faith and its significance into public affairs of the world after a long self-isolation of faith and theology which coincide with the secular movement that privatized religion." Felix Wilfred, *Asian Public Theology: Critical Concerns in Challenging Times* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2010), xv–xvi. The other two factors are the revision of the concept of the autonomy of earthly realities and the crisis of the enlightenment paradigm.

However, if we follow the inspiration of public theology coherently, we will eventually arrive at the field of interreligious dialogue. The starting point of public theology is the reality of moral and religious pluralism in society, and its goal is to introduce a theologically informed discourse on social issues. Therefore, public theologians should acknowledge that our discourse should engage not just secularist thinkers but also adherents of other religions. Those other religions may, in turn, also address theologically informed discourse to us.[545] Nevertheless, this necessary dimension of public theology has not been completely absent from our initial reflections on the topic. Already Martin Marty included openness to other religions as a main trait of his model of public church.[546] This public church, Marty's ideal of modern ecumenical Christianity, embodies the shape of a Christian Community that public theology implies for him. Moreover, the positive reception of public theology current in more religiously pluralistic contexts like India is necessarily contributing to the development of this interreligious side of public theology. In his recent book called *Asian Public Theology,* Indian theologian Felix Wilfred begins the introduction by forecasting that "Asian Public Theology will be one that will be inherently interreligious in nature."[547]

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[545] "[P]ublic theology addresses issues that bear upon a religious community but also pertain to the larger society, including those who identify themselves with other faith traditions or with none." Breitenberg, "To tell the truth: Will the real public theology please stand up?" 66.

[546] Cf. Marty, *The Public Church: Mainline-Evangelical-Catholic*, 5–6.

[547] Wilfred, *Asian Public Theology*, xi; for another example of public theology in the Indian context cf. Patrick Gnanapragasam, "Public Theology in the Indian Context: A Note on Its Prospects and Challenges" (presented at the Conference of Catholic Theological Institutions, Bangalore, India, 2011). I thank Prof. Catherine Cornille for letting me know about this current in Indian theology and putting me in contact with Prof. Gnanapragasam.

Our study focuses on a particular context: Spanish society. For twenty years now, the phenomenon of migration has brought increasing numbers of Muslims to Spain. One of the main Islamic associations in Spain, the *Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España*, in its recent study, estimates that 3% (1,498,707 inhabitants) of the Spanish population is Muslim.[548] The numbers may not be impressive, but this statistic exerts a symbolic resonance. First, the common prejudice against Muslims and fear of a clash of civilizations is multiplied in Spain by our country's history of Muslim presence and the "Reconquista." Secondly, any argument addressed to the whole of society about the public presence of religions in the public sphere will be tested by the actual capacity of religion to dialogue and collaborate with other religions represented in society. The relationship with Muslim communities will be a particular touchstone of any public religious discourse. Finally, most Muslims in contemporary Spain are immigrants with low income and low social status. Therefore, the effort to respect their religion and culture and integrate them in a common social dialogue springs naturally from a coherent preferential option for the poor. The effort to develop an appropiate way to address Muslims and discuss social issues, as public theology seeks to do, becomes, thus, not just a possibility but a truly urgent matter.

Contemporary dialogue between Christians and Muslims features several neuralgic issues in its agenda: the different understandings of the figure of Abraham, the consideration of Muhammad as a Prophet, the understanding of Word of God, the divinity

[548] Cf. Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España, "Estudio Demográfico De La Población Musulmana: Explotación Estadística Del Censo De Ciudadanos Musulmanes En España Referido a Fecha 31/12/2010," 2012, http://oban.multiplexor.es/estademograf.pdf.

of Christ, and the Trinity.[549] A section of this chapter will note that there are different levels of interreligious dialogue and that these issues are situated at the level of the dialogue of theological exchange.[550] However, probably the most urgent issue in this dialogue does not belong to this level of theological exchange. It belongs rather to the level of the dialogue of action or collaboration, where both religions stand beside each other in order to face a common goal. This urgent issue is the understanding of social pluralism and, as a consequence, of human rights and religious freedom.[551]

It is at this level that public theology is essentially challenged when thinking about the encounter with Muslims. Public theology seeks to address social issues in a religiously and morally pluralistic society with theological arguments. But the presence of Muslims in modern plural societies could lead us to conclude that this effort of public theology is impossible. Christians and Muslims stand in a clearly competitive relationship to one another. First, both make claims of possessing the ultimate truth, and, thus, both feel called to a universal mission, to witness the truth to one another.[552] Second, Muslims consider

[549] A helpful approach to these major questions of Muslim-Christian dialogue appears in Christian W. Troll, *Dialogue and Difference: Clarity in Christian-Muslim Relations* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2009); Troll deals in depth with all these issues on his web page: Christian W. Troll, "Muslims Ask, Christians Answer," June 28, 2005, www.answers-to-muslims.com.

[550] Cf. the Document Dialogue and Mission, nn. 28-35, from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in Francesco Gioia, *Interreligious Dialogue: The Official Teachings of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)* (Boston: Pauline, 1994), 575–577; cf. also Troll, *Dialogue and Difference*, 20.

[551] Cf. Troll, *Dialogue and Difference*, 52ff.; Troll phrases the issue in this way: "Bearing in mind their respective truth-claims, can Christians and Muslims understand themselves in such a way that they can accept social pluralism and the tolerance it requires, and do so not hesitantly and grudgingly, but in such a way that they feel the religious obligation both to acknowledge others in their otherness and also to stand up as effectively as possible for the just treatment of others within society?" Ibid., 48.

[552] Cf. Troll, *Dialogue and Difference*, 76.

their religion as the "natural religion," the purification of all previous religions, including Christianity.[553] Third, as Spanish history demonstrates, there have been innumerable violent conflicts between Christians and Muslims throughout history that have created strong mutual antagonisms.[554] Finally, religious pluralism, the base on which public theology builds, has historically been understood in a very particular way by Muslims, through what they call the *dhimma* system. Regarding this last point, we should say that Muslims has historically tolerated the presence[555] of other religions in its midst, particularly Christians and Jews, the "people of the book" (*ahl al-kitâb*). However, this system of tolerance, the *dhimma,* was accepted just as a way to a possible conversion.[556] Moreover, the *dhimma* historically has supposed that Christians and Jews are subjected to Muslim political power and were second-class citizens.[557] Other religions were not even tolerated.

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[553] Cf. Ibid., 52.

[554] Cf. Ibid., 28ff.

[555] "According to Muslim canon law on the conquest of a non-Muslim country by Muslims, the population which does not embrace Islam and which is not enslaved is guaranteed life, liberty and, in a modified sense, property. They are, therefore, called *ahl al-dhimma*, 'people of the covenant or obligation,' or simply *al-dhimma* or *dhimmis* -the *dhimma* involving temporal rights from Muslims and duties toward Muslims… but such a *dhimma* is, in strictness, open only to a 'People of Scripture' (*ahl al-kitâb*), i.e. to Jews, Christians and Sabeans, which has been interpreted to cover Zoroastrians." H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, eds., "Dhimma," *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 75. The article mentions also how the *dhimma* in practice has been applied also to other religions than the ones mentioned. It also enumerates the rights and duties of the *dhimmi* in the Muslim societies which include paying a special tax and restrictions on the public practice of their religion.

[556] Cf. Troll, *Dialogue and Difference*, 52; "if one amongst the Pagans asks thee for asylum, grant it to him, so that he may hear the Word of Allah; and then escort him to where he can be secure, that is because they are men without knowledge." Q 9:6.

[557] Cf. Ibid., 110ff; also 29.

As an example of the difficulty addressing the Islamic communities in modern societies we can identify a major Muslim author named Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), whom Miroslav Volf, in his book *A Public Faith,* presents as an example of religious totalitarianism.[558] In his famous work *Milestones*, Qutb presents Islam in a way that does not allow much dialogue or sharing regarding society. In this book he affirms that,

> Islam knows only two kinds of societies, the Islamic and the *jahili.* The Islamic society is that which follows Islam in belief and ways of worship. The *jahili* society is that which does not follow Islam and in which neither the Islamic belief and concepts, nor Islamic morals and manners are cared for.[559]

Therefore, the task of Muslims is clear for Qutb: Because "[o]ther societies do not give it [Islam] any opportunity to organize its followers according to its own method," then we can deduce "the duty of Islam is to annihilate all such systems, as they are obstacles in the way of universal freedom."[560] This radical view shows us that the possibility of a Christian public theology in societies featuring the presence of Muslims is not necessarily easily attained.

We could posit a public theology in those circumstances only if we expect in all religions an open attitude to each other and an acceptance of human rights and pluralism. But the common perception is that many Muslims do not accept this presupposition.

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[558] Volf's proposal of a "religious political pluralism" would be the middle point between secular total exclusion of all religions and Qutb's religious totalitarianism. Cf. Miroslav Volf, *A Public Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2011), xi.

[559] Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (Kuala Lumpur: Holy Koran Publishing House, 1978), 173.

[560] Ibid., 137.

Therefore a question arises: Is it possible to develop and implement a public theology in societies with an important presence of Mulsims? And if such a theology is possible, how should it argue?

We will address both questions in this chapter. In a first section, we will study the thought of several Muslim authors of different origins and positions. The approach to the Muslim tradition will come first because before reflecting on the way to approach this tradition we should get in contact with it and listen to it. These authors will demonstrate the existence of an entire trend in the Islamic tradition working to develop an Islamic understanding of the main political values of pluralistic democracies. The positions of these authors will demonstrate to us that the elaboration of a public theology in societies with Muslim communities is possible. Only after having listened to the Muslim other and approach this tradition, in a subsequent section, we will explore the potential features of that public theology. Drawing from previous reflections upon these works, I will propose to continue building on Tracy's analogical imagination for its capacity to integrate the theological perspective and explicit religious sources. This is a central claim of Muslim social thinkers. However, in order to answer the actual problems of Christian-Muslim dialogue, Tracy's method should be engaged. As we have mentioned before, Tracy's thought tends to remain very speculative. A public-theology dialogue based on his thought alone could risk being driven in just about any direction or might just not address any concrete social issue at all. Therefore, my proposal is to add two other elements from the tradition of public theology. On the one hand, I will establish a normative framework based on the category of public religion, a religion that respects human rights. On the other hand,

I will identify a particular goal in order to guide the public-theology conversation between Christians and Muslims: the common good. The understanding of this common good should be suited to the reality of our pluralistic societies.

## II. LISTENING TO THE OTHER: ISLAMIC SOCIAL THINKING

For the German Jesuit Christian Troll, because Christians and Muslims today belong to pluralistic societies, "[i]n order to shape the cultural and religious diversity and complexity of these societies in politically fruitful ways, they above all need comprehensive and reliable information about each other."[561] In turn, David Tracy asserts that our times are marked by the need to open and expose ourselves to other cultures. For Tracy, we should "allow the other (whether person, event, or text) to claim our attention as other, not as a projection of our present fears, hopes and desires."[562] Therefore, I will begin this chapter presenting, not a general description of Islamic thought on social issues, but the actual voices of some Islamic thinkers who have reflected on social life in modern democratic societies. In particular I will present the thought of the following Muslim authors: Abdulaziz Sachedina (India-Tanzania), Nurcholish Majid (Indonesia), Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im (Sudan), Tariq Ramadan (Switzerland) and Ali Allawi (Iraq).

The diversity of positions among Muslims and the absence of a hierarchy that might unify Islamic doctrine make it very difficult to project a supposed Islamic thought on one

[561] Troll, *Dialogue and Difference*, 3.

[562] Tracy, *Dialogue with the Other*, 4; in my opinion, this is a weakness of Paul Valadier because his view of Islam is not based on direct contact and listening to Muslim authors, but on general descriptions of Islam. Cf. Valadier, *Détresse du politique, force du religieux*, 180–183.

particular issue. No single author, regardless of her coherence or rigorous use of Islamic sources, can claim to express the entire Islamic view on any issue. Moreover, it is important to broaden the scope of the authors studied because today the most creative and innovative ideas in Islam come from non-formal and non-academic contexts.[563] Therefore, in order to present a fair overview of Islamic views of social pluralism I have chosen a particular set of authors. These authors are a good representation of Muslim geographical and doctrinal richness because they represent various national origins, different branches of Islam and a range of approaches to social issues.[564] Nevertheless, they all share a common trait: they all have a positive approach to modern democratic and constitutional values and they try to read them from their Islamic background. Regarding this, we can entertain the objection that these authors' common position does not reflect the Islamic tradition, which would be less open. However, as any other tradition, the Muslim tradition is not finished or complete but it evolves in history. I see the Islamic tradition, since the Second World War, as immersed in a long and arduous historical process of integrating the major concepts of modern Western political thought such as nation-state, pluralism and human rights which are foreign to the traditional pre-nation-state Islamic worldview. Present ideologies of political Islam or islamicized versions of Marxist conceptions are flawed answers to this challenge. The present events of the so-called "Arab spring" can be considered somewhat

[563] Christian Troll identifies three categories of Muslim religious thinking in contemporary Islam: professional theologians at universities, ideologues of Islamism with degrees in other fields (sciences, engineering...), and scholars of Islamic ideas teaching outside theological faculties. Troll asserts that in recent decades the most important ideas on Islam have come from this third category. Cf. Troll, *Dialogue and Difference*, 61–62.

[564] I thank Professor James W. Morris for his advice and suggestions in this regard.

similar in effect to the 1848 revolutions in Europe.[565] Given this direction of growth of the Muslim tradition in history, we can consider the authors we are studying as, in John Courtney Murray's words, the "growing end" of the Muslim tradition.[566] In their effort to come to terms with the modern understanding of social and political life these authors represent the dimension of the tradition that is announcing its future developments. Thus, they are precious beginnings in order to anticipate the possibilities by which public theology can address its Muslim partners in modern pluralistic societies.

Before approaching the thought of these authors, we should, first of all, acknowledge the different levels of reflection at which these authors are working. Likewise, their contributions are addressed to different communities of reference. We will see a theological academic approach (Sachedina, Nurcholish), a juridical (An-Na'im), and a political-cultural approach (Ramadan and Allawi). In some cases they address mostly the Muslim community (Nurcholish), academia (Sachedina), the public interfaith debate (An-Na'im) or Western society in general (Ramadan and Allawi). These differences should help us to place each author in his context and to understand better his relationship with the other authors. My goal in presenting the authors will not be to show a comprehensive presentation of their thought. My goal will rather be to describe their position on the points that I believe are more important in order to develop a way to address Muslims from

[565] For a good account of the directions of reform among contemporary Muslims cf. John L. Esposito, *The Future of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 88ff.

[566] "[T]he consensus does have a growing end. It is indeed a legacy from the past, but not in the form of a deposit that is closed to all change and addition." Murray, *We Hold These Truths*, 102–103. In order to notice the difficulties of this growing end of Muslim tradition it is interesting to note that the authors I am presenting here reflect mostly from Western countries because of the limitations imposed in their own countries.

Christian public theology. These points would be: the backgrounds and audiences of the authors, their ways of approaching Muslim sources, their understandings of the relationship between religion and society, and their proposals to deal with religious pluralism in society.

### 1. ABDULAZIZ SACHEDINA

Abdulaziz Sachedina (1942-) is a scholar of Islam born in Tanzania from Indian origins. He belongs to the Shia Twelver tradition, and he now teaches religious studies at the University of Virginia.[567] He received his academic formation in Canada, India and Iran. Sachedina has written two main works on religion and social issues. In the first, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism,* he presented his method, and in his second book, *Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights,* he developed and deepened his thesis. Both works are addressed mainly to an academic audience. In these works he presents some theological reflections from inside Shia Islam which allow the integration of major modern social concepts like democratic pluralism and human rights. Sachedina acknowledges explicitly drawing a certain amount of inspiration from Christian public theology when developing his own approach. However, Sachedina prefers the term political theology because politics includes the implementation of religious ideals when building a just

[567] It is easy to recognize the influence of Shia Islam in Sachedina. His negative view of the Islamic political organization after Muhammad as well as his apparent preference for a *Mu'tazilite* theology, the one followed by the Shia, proves this. This Shiite influence raises questions about the acceptance that Sachedina's thought can have among Sunni Muslims.

order.[568] However, the methodological approach he takes is very close to the efforts of public theology.[569]

When approaching Islamic sources Sachedina wants to go further than just looking for compatibility between *Shari'a* and modern political concepts.[570] Sachedina wants to go theologically more deeply into the Islamic sources in order to find foundations for human rights and pluralism.[571] Sachedina wants to ground his reflection on a rigorous exegetical approach to the *Qur'ân*. He rejects an exegesis that separates different periods within the *Qur'ân.*[572] He thus reads the *Qur'ân* looking for references to universal humanity and interfaith relations from where he will try to develop a theological argument.[573] At this theological level, Sachedina recalls the conflict between the two main Islamic theological

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[568] "In the Christian context, Max Stackhouse speaks about 'public theology' to argue about the importance of theology for public discourse to discern the decisive role intensely personal commitments play in influencing civil society and in the development of democracy and human rights. However, in an Islamic context, I prefer to speak about political rather than public theology because politics determines the action plan for the implementation of religious ideals for a just public order." Abdulaziz Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 25.

[569] In this sense, it is interesting to note the many references to the idea of "correlating" revelation with reason when thinking about social issues. "Moreover, political theology (*al-kalâm al-siyâsî*) in Islam correlates reason and revelation in such a way that political jurisprudence (*al-fiqh al-siyâsî*) undertakes to translate personal faith into social action through judicial decisions that envision and endeavor to motivate the faithful to establish just institutions in society so that they objectively reflect God's will for humanity." Ibid., 25.

[570] "[*Shari'a* means] the road to the watering place, the clear path to be followed... the *shari'a* is not 'law' in the modern sense of the word, any more than it is on account of its subject matter. It comprises, without restriction, as an infallible doctrine of duties the whole of the religious, political, social, domestic and private life of those who profess Islam, and the activities of the tolerated members of other faiths as far as they may not be detrimental to Islam." H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, eds., "Shari'a," *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 524–525.

[571] Cf. Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights*, 16.

[572] Cf. Abdulaziz Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 26. We will see how this constitutes a critique of An-Na'im's approach.

[573] Cf. Ibid., 26.

schools: the *Ash'arite*, and the *Mu'tazilite*. First, the *Ash'arite* school emphasizes God's will and human submission to it; secondly, the *Mu'tazilite* school considers reason God's gift to humanity in order to develop moral agency.[574] *Mu'tazilite* theology has been retrieved today by Muslim modernists who want to bring the Muslim tradition and the modern world into accord. Sachedina exhibits a preference for the *Mu'tazilite* theology,[575] but nevertheless wants to go beyond this alternative between *Ash'arite* and *Mu'tazilite* theology because both schools ultimately make only a selective use of the *Qur'ân.* For him what is required is a better balance between reason and revelation where "revelation [depends] on reason for its validity, and reason [seeks] to validate its conclusions by showing their correlation to the revelation."[576] As an example, in the particular case of women's rights, Sachedina suggests a differentiation between universal principles of the *Qur'ân* and historical applications to the society of the Prophet. The same can be said of the societies for which *Shari'a* was formulated in the first centuries of Islam.[577] The universal principles will be related to the idea of a nature created by God (*fitra)* common to every man and women.[578]

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[574] Cf. Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights*, 60–61. The *Ash'arite* theology won the conflict and is the official position in Sunni Islam; the *mu'tazilite* is still the theology of Shia Islam. The *al-Mu'tazila* current of theology considered the *Qur'an* as created and they defended free will in humans. Cf. H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, eds., "al-Mu'tazila," *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 423.

[575] Cf. Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism*, 20.

[576] Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights*, 62.

[577] Cf. Ibid., 130–131.

[578] "So set thou thy face truly to the religion being upright, the nature [*fitra*] in which Allah has made mankind." Q 30:30. "*Fitra* is a 'noun of kind'… to the infinitive *fatr* and means… , 'a kind or way of creating or of being created.' … Its theologically important usage is in the saying of Muhammad, 'every infant is born according to the *fitra'* (*'ala "l-fitra*; i.e. Allah's kind or way of creating, 'on God's plan"…); then his parents

Regarding the relationship between religion and society, Sachedina clearly espouses the goal of a democratic society. In this society, for Sachedina, "the consent of the governed, the rule of the people through their elected representatives, and basic human rights and equality of all citizens within a religion-based ideology are promoted through constitutional guarantees."[579] And yet Islam for him is "a comprehensive system of beliefs and practices that relates private and public, individual and society, spiritual and mundane."[580] There is then no such thing as a separation of Church and state in the Islamic tradition. Nevertheless Sachedina believes that we can understand this tradition in a way that does not impose religion on society. The reason is that *Shari'a* itself makes a certain distinction between God-human relations and human-human relations. There is a separate jurisdiction (*nitâq sulta*) of these two dimensions.[581] On the one hand, issues regarding the relationship between God and humans follow religious criteria and no human institution can compel the individual on religious issues. On the other, issues related to human-human relationship can be ruled by the government but must follow the demands of justice as criteria.[582] At bottom, for Sachedina, Islam requires freedom in order to believe, as is explicitly stated in Q 2:256 "Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear

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make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian." ""H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, eds., "Fitra," *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 108.

[579] Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights*, 45.

[580] Ibid., 63.

[581] Cf. Ibid., 68.

[582] Cf. Ibid., 77–78.

from error."[583] The *Qur'ân* asserts then that humans have the ability to accept or reject faith and an ethical life because they are endowed with the *fitra* (Q 91:7-10) or common humanity. The *fitra* corresponds then also to what we call conscience.[584]

Regarding the situation of non-Muslims in Islamic societies, Sachedina acknowledges that historically Islamic thought, while recognizing pluralism in their societies, has been developed from the basis of the pressumed superiority of Muslims over other believers.[585] This approach is unacceptable in the present historical moment. The response to this problem from theorists of liberal democracy is to completely remove religion from public discourse and public life. The disappearance of religion from public life creates, then, a non-religious inclusive public space which is open to all citizens.[586] Sachedina's efforts go in the direction of rereading critically the Muslim tradition from the point of view of pluralism and human rights. Sachedina asserts that the *Qur'ân* and Muhammad's practice suppose actual religious pluralism.[587] The *Qur'ân* affirms that there is a common morality and a common good for Muslims and non-Muslims based on a

[583] Cf. Ibid., 65; For the quotation from the *Qur'ân* cf. The Presidency of Islamic Researchers, IFTA, Call and Guidance, ed., *The Holy Qur-ân: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary* (Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah: The Custodians of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur-ân, 1992).

[584] Cf. Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism*, 84.

[585] Cf. Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights*, 68.

[586] Cf. Ibid., 44–45; Sachedina seems to have John Rawls in mind as a representative of this type of thought, cf. Ibid., 51.

[587] "The scope of this work is limited to searching for the Islamic roots of democratic pluralism... my search in the Islamic sources has led me to identify religious pluralism as one of the most important preconditions for the development of a democratic society in the Muslim world." Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism*, 129.

common nature (*fitra*) of all humans.[588] This supposes the acceptance of religious pluralism. The *Shari'a* is a law that applies only to the Muslim community.[589] In this sense the Islamic tradition recognizes the existence of groups' rights.[590] Sachedina blames the first Caliphs for developing a political ideology of Islamic superiority that is not present in the *Qur'ân.*[591] This ideology includes the *dhimma* system.

Sachedina views the way in which religions relate to each other as forming an overlapping consensus in the main democratic values through the convergence of the various religions and world views.[592] It is readily apparent that Sachedina takes this concept of an overlapping consensus from John Rawls' *Political Liberalism.* However, Sachedina concludes that Rawls' thought does not allow religious discourse to have its proper place in public life,[593] particularly the place in public life which the Muslim tradition require. Sachedina defends the role of religion in building a tolerant public sphere.[594] Concretely, Sachedina is proposing an Islamic political theology, parallel to public theology. This

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[588] Cf. Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights*, 49ff. "So set thou thy face truly to the religion being upright, the nature of which Allah has made mankind: No change (there is) in the work (wrought) by Allah: that is the true religion: But most among mankind know not." Q 30:30.

[589] Cf. Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism*, 129.

[590] Cf. Ibid., 97.

[591] Cf. Ibid., 138; Sachedina as an example mentions here a letter to the governor of the province of Egypt (660C.E.) where caliph 'Ali himself acknowledges the equality of all citizens regarding their religion at the basis of their common humanity. Cf. Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights*, 79.

[592] Cf. Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights*, 13 and 17.

[593] Cf. Ibid., 224 note 12.

[594] Cf. Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism*, 77.

public theology can correlate reason and revelation so as to integrate religious-based discourse in the building of society's overlapping consensus.[595]

## 2. NURCHOLISH MAJID

Nurcholish Majid (1939-2005) was an Indonesian scholar of Islam of great influence in his country. Majid was a Sunni Muslim who in his younger years was influenced by western and Islamic education in his homeland. Later in his life he moved to the U.S. and studied Islamic Studies at the University of Chicago. Nurcholish's family was associated with the later banned Indonesian Muslim political party called *Masyumi.* Inside this Islamic socio-political movement some intellectuals sought to present a modernized view of Islam which they called *Pembaruan*. Benjamin Intan identifies this position as an Islamic neo-modernism and sees Majid as the one who formalized this line of thought.[596] In line with this inspiration, Nurcholish's intellectual efforts throughout his life have gone in the direction of proving Muslims' capability to stand in the modern struggle of ideas. In order to do so, the Islamic tradition should integrate modern principles like pluralism,

[595] "Moreover, political theology (*al-kalâm al-siyâsî*) in Islam correlates reason and revelation in such a way that political jurisprudence (*al-fiqh al-siyâsî*) undertakes to translate personal faith into social action through judicial decisions that envision and endeavor to motivate the faithful to establish just institutions in society so that they objectively reflect God's will for humanity. Islamic political theology based on the central doctrine of a just and merciful God bound by His own moral essence to guide humanity to create a just public order can serve as the major theological-ethical foundation for human rights and its prerequisite, namely, democratic governance in Muslim societies." Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights*, 25.

[596] Cf. Benyamin F. Intan, *"Public Religion" and the Pancasila-Based State of Indonesia* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2006), 82ff; cf. also Benyamin F. Intan, "Public Religion and the Pancasila-based State of Indonesia: A Normative Argument within a Christian-Muslim Dialogue (1945-1998)" (Boston College, 2004).

tolerance, human rights and democracy.[597] A good expression of Nurcholish's thought on Islam is the expression he coined: Islam, yes; Islamic party, no.[598] His main work published in English is called *The True Face of Islam*; it is composed of a collection of his essays written throughout his career beginning in 1970. His position thus represents a position which is older than the other authors considered.

It is important to understand the social context in which Nurcholish writes, in this case Indonesia. Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world, is shaped by a particular type of Islam which is Sunni and sufi-inspired.[599] Regarding this, Indonesian Islam supposes a very particular inculturation of the Muslim tradition in the local cultures and languages parallel to the situation in Turkey, India or Persia.[600] However, the political system is based on a particular set of pluralistic principles established at the moment of independence as a way to integrate the various religious communities represented in the archipielago nation. This system is called the *Pancasila,* or five principles, which include monotheism, humanism, national unity, democracy and social justice.[601] Indonesia is constituted by a heterogeneous set of peoples and religions and it has had a short existence

[597] For a very good summary of Majid's life cf. the foreword to his book Nurcholish Majid, *The True Face of Islam: Essays on Islam and Modernity in Indonesia* (Ciputat: Voice Center Indonesia, 2003), xv–xx.

[598] Cf. Ibid., 315ff.

[599] Cf. Ibid., 9ff.

[600] Cf. Ibid., 7.

[601] Nurcholish acknowledges the influence of United States history and the Declaration of Independence in the elaboration of the *Pancasila* principles. Cf. Ibid., 313; Benjamin Intan considers *Pancasila* as a very good channel to implement Casanova's idea of a public religion. Cf. Intan, *"Public Religion" and the Pancasila-Based State of Indonesia*, 221ff.

as a nation.[602] Therefore, a major concern for Nurcholish is how religions – particularly Islam—can contribute to building the new nation.[603]

Nurcholish's efforts go in the direction of deepening the Muslim intellectual legacy in a critical and historical way.[604] Using an image from Sukarno, leader of Indonesian independence and a main contributor to the *Pancasila* system, Nurcholish speaks of capturing the flame of Islam, and not its ashes.[605] This effort should be conducted in the spirit of Muslim *ijtihâd,* the personal rational effort to interpret the Muslim religious texts.[606] Nurcholish defines *ijtihâd* as "an on-going thought process based on the evaluation of social and historical phenomena, which, from time to time, need to be reviewed in order to determine whether they are really correct or erroneous."[607] Because of Islam's strong claim of universality, of being the natural religion (*dîn al-fitrah),* Nurcholish distinguishes

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[602] Cf. Majid, *The True Face of Islam*, 311.

[603] "Muslims in Indonesia could make great contributions to the nation by practicing their religion in a correct, free, and sincere manner. Pancasila guarantees this opportunity" Ibid., 194.

[604] Cf. Ibid., 106–107.

[605] Cf. Ibid., 222; for a very good history of Indonesia's independence and the implementation of the Pancasila system cf. Intan, *"Public Religion" and the Pancasila-Based State of Indonesia*, 31ff.

[606] "*Idjtihâd* means the exerting of one's self to the utmost degree to attain an object and is used technically for so exerting one's self to form an opinion (*zann*) in a case (*kadîya*) or as to a rule (*hukm*) of law...This is done by applying analogy (*kiyâs*) to the Kur'an and the Sunna... The duty and right of *idjtihâd* thus did not involve inerrancy. Its result was always zann, fallible opinion. Only the combined *idjtihâd* of the whole Muslim people led to *idjmâ'*, agreement, and was inerrant... But this broad *idjtihâd* soon passed into the special *idjtihâd* of those who had a peculiar right to form judgments and whose judgments should be followed by others... In Shi'a Islâm there are still absolute *mudjtahid*'s." H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, eds., "Idjtihâd," *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 158; in the article on Shari'a in this same encyclopedia the authors mention how the conviction of the cessation of the *idjtihad* has made *shari'a* very rigid and with little significance for the modern world. Cf. Gibb and Kramers, "Shari'a," 527.

[607] Majid, *The True Face of Islam*, 322.

between the perennial spiritual affirmations of the *Qur'ân*, and its applications. These applications are determined by history and culture.[608] In Nurcholish's understanding, the *Qur'ân* does not present a comprehensive moral system. The moral norms that the original Islam used were common to other religions and cultures of that period. The difference that the *Qur'ân* supposes is a new conception of the place of these norms in the person's life.[609] This view of Nurcholish presents the Islamic tradition as an inclusive and open religion.

When reflecting on the relationship between religion and society, Nurcholish tries to draw insight from the *salaf* community, the first community of the Prophet Muhhamad as his most direct followers.[610] Nurcholish pays attention particularly to the Medina Charter, the agreement between Muhammad and the first Muslim community with the other communities of Medina. This agreement was signed immediately after the *Hijrah* – the migration of Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina in 622 C.E.[611] In this example, Nurcholish sees the presence in the Islamic tradition of modern values such as civil society, democracy, pluralism and freedom of religion. These values can be found in other original Muslim documents.[612] This first Muslim inspiration was somehow betrayed when the Umayyad dynasty was established as a hereditary form of government following

[608] Cf. Ibid., 291 Nurcholish applies this distinction to the case of the use of veils by Muslim women.

[609] "[T]he *Qur'ân* made no attempt to lay down a comprehensive moral system. The very word for moral behavior, *al-ma'rûf*, means 'the known.' What is new is the conception of the place of these norms in a person's life." Ibid., 293.

[610] Cf. Ibid., 222. The different branches of Islam do not agree on when this *salaf* period ended.

[611] Cf. Ibid., 140.

[612] Cf. Ibid., 261.

the patterns of the Byzantine and Persian Empires (661 C.E.).[613] Nurcholish compares the Indonesian *Pancasila* system with Islam's Medina Charter.[614]

From this hermeneutical stance, Nurcholish tries to reread the Muslim tradition in order to integrate certain concepts of modern political thinking. He turns first to pluralism, and sees it reflected in the *Qur'ân* presented as a decree from God that should encourage each believer to advance in good deeds.[615] The Islamic tradition considers religious freedom because it deeply values other religions. The Muslim tradition affirms that every religion which seeks the submission of the human being to God – islam with a lower case i—is a true religion. Therefore it recognizes a common element in all humans which is the basis for every true religion. Islam, with a capital I, is the religion revealed to the Prophet Muhammad that perfects all the others.[616] Finally, Nurcholish rejects the idea of a Muslim state as a false apologetic stance in opposition to Western socio-political ideologies.[617] Instead, he defends a distinction, not a separation, between the state and religion. The state is an aspect of worldly life which is ruled by a rational and collective effort following the

[613] Cf. Ibid., 303.

[614] Cf. Ibid., 162.

[615] Cf. Ibid., 143. "To thee We sent the Scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety: so judge between them by what Allah hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the truth that hath come to thee. To each among you have we prescribed a Law and an Open Way. If Allah had so willed, He would have made you a single people, but (His Plan is) to test you in what he hath given you: so strive as in a race in all virtues. The goal of you all is to Allah; it is He that will show you the truth of the matters in which ye dispute." Q 5:48.

[616] Cf. Ibid., 124.

[617] Cf. Ibid., 334.

principle of good deeds (*'amal Sâlih)*.[618] Religion belongs to the dimension of faith (*Îmân)* which is individual and spiritual, giving a very special motivation to the person's actions.[619] The state should not enter into the sphere of religion because no one can rule the inner motivations of a person. Moreover, establishing an institution of spiritual authority among Muslims supposes a type of idolatry (*shirk)*.[620]

### 3. ABDULLAHI AHMED AN-NA'IM

Abdullahi An-Na'im (1946-) is a legal scholar of Sudanese origin. His formation has been in the field of law in universities in Sudan and England. Since 1995 he has been a law professor at Emory University, Atlanta.[621] An-Na'im is a particularly valuable source in evaluating Muslim social thought because his arguments were presented by John Rawls as an understanding of the Islamic tradition perfectly compatible with his own political philosophy.[622] An-Na'im is also the main disciple of Ustadh Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, a Sudanese scholar of Islam who proposed a new hermeneutical approach to the *Qur'ân* and the main Muslim texts. An-Na'im's book *Islam and the Secular State* is addressed to

[618] Cf. Ibid., 326ff.

[619] Cf. Ibid., 324ff.

[620] Cf. Ibid., 336; "Join (*shirk*) not in worship others with Allah: for false worship is indeed the highest wrong-doing" Q 31.13. "*Shirk*… association, especially associating a companion with God, i.e. worshipping another besides God, polytheism." H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, eds., "Shirk," *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 542.

[621] Cf. "Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im CV", October 10, 2008, http://www.flw.ugent.be/cie/CIE2/an-naimcv.htm.

[622] Rawls calls An-Na'im's position "a perfect example of overlapping consensus." Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 461, note 46.

Muslims and non-Muslims alike in order to open a debate on the public role of *Shari'a*, a debate in which Muslims and non-Muslims should participate.[623]

An-Na'im approaches the Islamic sources from one particular hermeneutical stance, in his words, "we always understand Islamic sources… as who we are, in our specific location and context."[624] His book deals with the public role of *Shari'a*, Islamic law derived from human interpretations of the *Qur'ân* and the *Sunna*.[625] We should open a public discussion about *Shari'a* because, in the future, it will have a role in any society where Muslims live. Any approach to the primary sources of Islam, *Qur'ân* and *Sunna,* is made through the accumulated interpretation of generations of Muslims. Human agency is therefore a key in Islam.[626] The methodology of interpretation of these sources (*usul al-fiqh)* includes consensus (*ijma'*), analogy (*qiyas*) and juridical reasoning (*ijtihâd*).[627] Any understanding of the *Shari'a* is the fruit of *ijtihâd,* the reasoning of human beings when

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[623] Cf. Abdullah Ahmed An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Shari'a* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), vii.

[624] Ibid.; for a more detailed development on the sources of Islam cf. Abdullah Ahmed An-Na'im, *Toward an Islamic Reformation: Civil Liberties, Human Rights, and International Law* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 11–33.

[625] Cf. An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State*, 3; "custom, use and wont, statute. The word is used in many connections. .. Muhammad's *sunna* in the sense of his words, actions and silent approval is fixed orally and in writing in the *Hadith*." H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, eds., "Sunna," *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 552.

[626] Cf. An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State*, 11.

[627] "*Fikh* ("intelligence, knowledge") is the name given to jurisprudence in Islam. It is, like the *jurisprudentia* of the Romans, *rerum divinarum atque humanarum notitia* and in its widest sense covers all aspects of religious, political and civil life." H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, eds., "Fikh," *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 102. "*Usûl al-fikh*, i.e. the doctrine of the 'roots', the sources of law and the methodology of their application." Ibid., 106.

interpreting the main Islamic sources.[628] The consensus of Muslims determines the *ijtihâd* which becomes *Shari'a.*[629] Although there are limits to the *ijtihâd* and some scholars doubt if it has been closed as a possibility to interpret the *Qur'ân,* An-Na'im believes that nothing prevents the practice of *ijtihâd.* For him *ijtihâd* is a way to formulate new interpretations of the *Qur'ân* and the *Sunna* in order to answer the new problems of modern societies. The consensus of Muslims will show which interpretations become part of the *Shari'a* and which not.[630]

An-Na'im suggests a particular hermeneutical approach to the *Qur'ân* proposed by his mentor Ustadh Mahmoud Mohamed Taha.[631] Taha, in order to allow a new reading of the *Qur'ân* to address modern issues, and instead of merely ignoring more problematic verses, proposes to differentiate two periods in the writing of the *Qur'ân*: the Meccan period (610-622) and the Medinan period (622-632). On the one hand, the earlier period reflects the universal teaching of Islam. On the other, the later period, related to the actual political implementation of Islam in Medina, reflects the adaptation of the Muslim tradition to the historical circumstances of the Arabian society of those times.[632] Controverted

[628] Cf. An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State*, 13.

[629] Cf. Ibid., 12–13.

[630] Cf. Ibid., 13.

[631] We should take into account that Taha's hermeneutical approach to the *Qur'ân* and *Shari'a* is highly controversial. Taha himself was arrested and executed in 1985 by the Sudanese government for heresy.

[632] An-Na'im's proposal, based on Taha's hermeneutical approach to the *Qur'ân*, is not accepted by everyone. Beyond a rejection from traditionalist grounds we have strong critics from liberal authors. Regarding this, Sachedina affirms that Taha's reading of the *Qur'ân* separating the Meccan and Medinan periods is untenable because we find important moral elements in the Medinan period, like references to a common humanity in every person. Cf. Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism*, 145, note 8; Nurcholish Majid's use

concepts such as aggressive *jihad,* subordination of women, or the *dhimma* system for non-Muslims correspond to this period. Directing this hermeneutical lens upon the *Qur'ân* allows one to develop a new juridical reflection (*ijtihâd)* for renewing the *Shari'a.*[633]

When considering the relationship between religion and society, An-Na'im rejects the idea of an Islamic state which enforces a fossilized version of *Shari'a*. For An-Na'im this is the product of Western influence in the late Ottoman Empire.[634] He proposes a secular state, neutral regarding religion, as the best way to organize modern societies.[635] Nevertheless, An-Na'im affirms that the actual shape of the secular state – the relationship between religion and society, is not already premade, it should be negotiated in each culture and context.[636] The secular state is also more consistent with the nature of the Muslim tradition than any idea of a Muslim state. We have seen how human agency and freedom is key in the development of the Islamic tradition. The secular state is consistent with this tradition because it allows individuals to embrace Islam and to follow the *Shari'a* out of

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of the Medinan Charter as a base for defending an Islamic pluralism also undermines An-Na'im's views. Majid, *The True Face of Islam*, 140.

[633] For An-Na'im's description of Taha's hermeneutical approach cf. An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State*, 135 and 284.

[634] Cf. Ibid., 287; An-Na'im points out that in fact the *Qur'ân* addresses Muslims as a community but it does not give any indication about the type of government they should have. Cf. Ibid., 267.

[635] Cf. An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State*, 1.

[636] "As comparative reflection on the experience of Islamic and other societies readily reveals, the public role of religion is being constantly negotiated and renegotiated among different actors... the complex role of religion in the political life of any society should be understood on its own epistemological, political, and cultural terms." Ibid., 292.

their free choice, not by imposing it.[637] Moreover, consensus is an important element in developing *Shari'a*, therefore the state cannot impose one particular view of *Shari'a*. There should be freedom to express the different opinions and freedom to develop the different types of consensus that will shape *Shari'a.*[638] Therefore, An-Na'im proposes the modern secular state as the best model to organize Muslim societies.[639]

This requires a development in the interpretation of the Islamic sources that integrate the principles of the constitutional state and human rights. The model of social life implemented by the Prophet and the first Muslim community in Medina was the product of the Prophet's special inspiration and cannot be realistically repeated.[640] This secular state which An-Na'im proposes implies the separation of religion and the state but not the disappearance of religion from public life.[641] An-Na'im explains this through the distinction between the state and politics.[642] The state does not exhaust political life, although it

[637] Cf. Ibid., 268.

[638] Cf. Ibid., 30.

[639] "My purpose is to affirm that the secular state, as defined in this book, is more consistent with the inherent nature of *Shari'a* and the history of Islamic societies than are false and counterproductive assertions of a so-called Islamic state or the alleged enforcement of *Shari'a* as state law." Ibid., 268; An-Na'im is here rejecting two different positions: the idea of an Islamic state as well as the efforts to develop an Islamic countermodel of modernity. Cf. Ibid., 273.

[640] Cf. An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State*, 106–107.

[641] Cf. Ibid., 4.

[642] It is very interesting to note how all the Islamic authors, including the more open ones, tend to use the term "politics" when referring to what we would call civil society. I think this shows the more integrated Islamic view of the secular and profane dimensions. Cf. Ibid., 7; the same could be said of Sachedina's preference for the term political theology over public theology, cf. Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights*, 25.

influences it and should be rooted in it. Islam and *Shari'a* should still be present in social life at the level of politics but should not be imposed by the state.[643]

Because An-Na'im is proposing a modern constitutional and secular state where all citizens are equal, our author rejects the traditional social system of *dhimma* because it treats the non-Muslims with inequality.[644] Muslims should develop the interpretation of their sources in order to integrate freedom of religion and equal treatment of all citizens in a state.[645] Two arguments to help in this reform are the need of freedom in order to embrace faith[646] and the application of the Golden Rule when treating non-Muslims.[647]

The way for the different religions to be present in public life and influence politics respecting each other is through what An-Na'im calls civic reason. Civic reason is a way to intervene in public life. Civic reason fulfills the requirement that "the rationale and purpose of public policy or legislation be based on the sort of reasoning that most citizens can accept or reject and use to make counterproposals through public debate without reference to religious belief as such."[648] An-Na'im's civic reason is clearly inspired by John Rawls' more recent and more open understanding of the role of religion in public life, and his idea

[643] Cf. An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State*, 7.

[644] Cf. Ibid., 130.

[645] Cf. Ibid., 117.

[646] Cf. Ibid., 122.

[647] Cf. Ibid., 136.

[648] Ibid., 100.

of the requirement of the proviso.[649] The introduction of religious arguments by invoking civic reason allows for the creation of an overlapping consensus in society based on the constitutional values.[650] It also allows cross-cultural dialogue to help the different cultures to appropriate the different values as well as to develop and change.[651] An-Na'im also briefly set some conditions for this interreligious debate on public policy and state law. In his opinion, there is need of some particular virtues: civility, mutual respect and discretion. Moreover, An-Na'im sets a limit to the debate, it should "focus on matters of public policy and law and avoid questions of religious doctrine and ritual practices."[652] Therefore for him the interreligious encounter on social issues should not delve into other faith issues.

### 4. TARIQ RAMADAN

Tariq Ramadan (1962-) is a Sunni Muslim, Swiss intellectual of Egyptian origins. His grandfather was Hassan al Banna the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Ramadan did a PhD at the University of Geneva on Nietzsche, and studied Islamic jurisprudence in Al-Azhar University in Cairo. He participates regularly in interreligious debates in Europe. In his reflection he has addressed especially the role of Islamic minorities in western countries. Thus, he is particularly important for our study due to its

[649] In his essay "The idea of public reason revisited" Rawls allowed the introduction of religious arguments in public discussion after imposing one requirement, the proviso. The proviso means that religious arguments can be present in public life "provided that in due course proper political reasons -- and not reasons given solely by comprehensive doctrines-- are presented that are sufficient to support whatever the comprehensive doctrines are said to support." Rawls, "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited," 453.

[650] Cf. An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State*, 21.

[651] Cf. Ibid., 22.

[652] Ibid., 270.

European context as well as for being the main intellectual point of reference for Muslims living in Spain.

In his book *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity,* Ramadan addresses one question: "can the Muslim world accede to modernity without denying some of the fundamentals of the Islamic religion?."[653] Modernity for Ramadan is a process which started in Europe in the 15th century and which consists in "a liberation, the breaking of the chains of all intangible dogmas, stilted traditions and evolving societies. It represents accession to progress."[654] This process has had wonderful results for Europe in terms of liberty of knowledge, science and technology. However, understood as an ideology, what he calls modernism, it has also brought very negative consequences. Examples of these consequences are the huge differences between the north and the south in our contemporary world or the present social and political crises in the West. Ramadan's thesis is that modernization ultimately is just the imposition of the Western understanding of modernity, and that the Islamic tradition can offer us a different understanding of the same process that is very enlightening.[655]

Ramadan's thought is based on the two main sources in the Muslim tradition: the *Qur'ân* and the *Sunna.* The *Qur'ân* is God's revelation to Muhammad which could be summarized in the principle of *tawhîd, "*the unicity of the Creator Who does not beget nor

[653] Tariq Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity* (Markfield, U.K.: The Islamic Foundation, 2004), 1.

[654] Ibid., 3.

[655] Cf. Ibid., 7–8.

has He begotten."[656] The revelation deals with every aspect of human life, economy, society, politics… it gives relative answers to historical situations but behind these answers we can find absolute principles.[657] The *Sunna,* or traditions about Muhammad, accompany the *Qur'ân* when trying to find answers to particular problems. The *Qur'ân* and the *Sunna* cannot answer every question. The *Shari'a* law draws concrete rules from these two major Muslim sources. In the domain of worship things are quite fixed. However in the domain of social affairs the sources of the Islamic tradition do not give precise prescriptions.[658] Therefore, Muslims consider *ijtihâd,* or personal effort to reflect, as a way to find an answer to a particular problem in harmony with the main sources of their faith.[659] The application of *ijtihâd* allows Muslims to adapt to the different circumstances of history.

Ramadan presents the whole Muslim conception of man as based on three main principles: the Creator's ownership of creation,[660] the human beings' responsibility for the

[656] Ibid., 12; "[*Tawhid*] means literally 'making one' or 'asserting oneness'. In consequence, it is applied theologically to the oneness… of Allah in all its meaning." H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, eds., "Tawhid," *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 586.

[657] Cf. Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*, 13.

[658] Cf. Ibid., 47–48; "[T]he *Shari'a* is applied in the immediacy of the daily lot of each practicing person, in a more or less complete manner, but always in tension and search; for each person, according to his capabilities, applies it in the hope of always going further in deepening his spirituality and practice." Ibid., 51.

[659] Cf. Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*, 16ff.

[660] "To Allah belongeth all that is in the heavens and on earth. Whether ye show what is in your minds or conceal it, Allah calleth you to account for it. He forgiveth whom He pleaseth, and punisheth who He pleaseth. For Allah hath power over all things." Q 2:284.

management of creation,[661] and the idea of an original permission to man (*al-ibaha al asliyya)*.[662] These principles are the content of Muslim submission, in other words, of Islam.[663] This main inspiration of Islam implies a particular approach to social reality and can be made concrete in some principles for the social, political and economic order. Ramadan tries to formulate in his book some of these main social principles regarding society, family, women, *jihad*, democracy, human rights, private property and interest on loans. Therefore, for Ramadan Islam is not just a religion but a culture based on a system of values.[664] Islamic culture is based on the remembrance of God and the *tawhîd* which colors every human activity. Therefore in Islamic culture "the sacred permeates the profane that is carried by means of a [vivid] memory."[665]

To go beyond easy prejudices we should consider the whole of Islamic culture when trying to interpret a given trait within it. This Islamic culture stands as an alternative to the Western culture that imposes an ideology of modernism.[666] Dominant Western principles,

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[661] "It is He Who hath made you the inheritors of the earth: He hath raised you in ranks, some above others; that He may try you in the gifts He hath given you: for thy Lord is quick in punishment: yet He is indeed oft-forgiving most merciful." Q 6:165.

[662] "Do ye not see that Allah has subjected to your (use) all things in the heavens and on earth, and has made His bounties flow to you in exceeding measure, (both) seen and unseen? Yet there are among men those who dispute about Allah, without knowledge and without guidance, and without a Book to enlighten them!" Q 31:20

[663] Cf. Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*, 22.

[664] "More than a religion, it [Islam] is a culture and, in this case, a culture based on a system of values and nourished by morality." Ibid., 238.

[665] Ibid., 230.

[666] Cf. Ibid., 201–203.

like democracy or human rights, imply a particular philosophy behind them that should be discerned when receiving them in the Islamic culture.[667] When facing the cultural differences between the West and the Muslim world, there are two unsatisfactory solutions: an identity-based reaction and a simplistic multicultural approach. Ramadan wants to contribute to this intercultural dialogue conveying to the other the whole Islamic cultural universe without hiding the differences.[668] For example, in the case of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights based on human dignity, Ramadan praises it as a major human achievement.[669] However, he points out that the philosophy behind them is marked by Western history.[670] Moreover, Ramadan briefly outlines the main inspiration for Muslim understanding of the rights of the individuals. These rights should be supported in the relationship with God and they should acknowledge also the responsibility and duty that comes with the rights.[671] Our author invites us to continue the reflection (*ijtihâd)* on the sources of Islam to seek there elements relating to rights.[672] Ramadan maintains that a real pluralism does not suppose imposing one's values on the other. A real pluralism allows

[667] Cf. Ibid., 89 and 98.

[668] Cf. Ibid., 272.

[669] Cf. Ibid., 99.

[670] Cf. Ibid.

[671] "The relationship with God comes first and this in each one of these domains. The notions of responsibility and duty come first... The [individual] has obligations towards God, himself, other human beings and also towards nature before possessing rights." Ibid., 100.

[672] Cf. Ibid., 101.

each culture to develop its own reflection in the direction of such common values as human rights.[673]

Ramadan proposes, thus, a Muslim version of the modernization process which consists in developing social reform and scientific progress while maintaining a remembrance of the point of reference (*Tawhîd),* Revelation and a reminder to humans of the finalities of life in respect of creation, humans, animals and nature.[674] Inspired partly by the liberation theology movement among Christians,[675] Ramadan proposes to confront the injustice present in our contemporary world from this Islamic worldview. This confrontation would be carried out not by states but by grassroots and civil society organizations.[676] This supposes a triple liberation: liberation from a system that impedes the religious approach to action and reform, liberation from the miracles of Western technology introducing limits and finality upon it, and liberation from an overly simplistic rationalism that rejects transcendence.

Ramadan's proposal implies a particular understanding of the religion-society relationship. Ramadan's view on this topic takes as a point of reference the Medina Charter of the first Muslim community in Medina. This historical example of the first Muslim community implies the existence of two belongings or allegiances for the person. On the

[673] Cf. Ibid., 102.

[674] Cf. Ibid., 308.

[675] Cf. Ibid., 69.

[676] Cf. Ibid., 184. It is interesting to note the similarities of this idea with the movement of the Muslim Brotherhood.

one hand is the allegiance to the state "which makes of each person a full-bodied citizen whereby there is no majority other than that resulting from the vote."[677] On the other hand is the allegiance to the religious community, "for which there exists an autonomy of worship, language and legislation (for personal affairs)."[678] Ramadan considers that this Muslim model of society still needs to take full shape in the modern world in order to integrate pluralism. Moreover, he asserts that the dominant model of nation-state has been a failure and that Muslim should offer a new model which integrates religious identity.[679]

Ramadan tries to establish some principles in order to bring up to date the Muslim historical model of pluralist society, the *dhimma.* For this he set some principles: coexistence should be based on free will and equality of treatment; non-Muslim citizens should participate fully in political life; non-Muslims should be protected by the state and pay a tax for this, non-Muslims should be held in equality to Muslims; there should be freedom of conscience, the state being responsible for protecting the non-Muslims.[680] This model of Muslim pluralism proves for him that Islam acknowledges religious and cultural pluralism from the beginning.

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[677] Ibid., 116.

[678] Ibid.

[679] Cf. Ibid., 115.

[680] Cf. Ibid., 105ff. It is interesting to note that Ramadan has reservations about a non-Muslim being chief of state, that he excludes non-Muslims from military service and imposes on them an extra tax.

## 5. ALI A. ALLAWI

Ali A. Allawi (1947-) is a Shia Muslims born in Iraq. His formation was in the field of engineering and economics at M.I.T. and the London School of Economics. From 2003 until 2006 he held several positions in post-war governments in Iraq.[681] His book *The Crisis of Islamic Civilization* is addressed mainly to non-Muslims in order to highlight the deep crisis of the Muslim world and the need for it to deepen its spiritual roots in order to overcome that crisis.

In his book he presents a sweeping historical overview of the development and crisis of Islam. And he identifies the great present crisis not with the end of the Caliphate when the Mongols sacked Baghdad in 1258 C.E., but with the cultural disruption that Western colonialism and the challenge of Western modernity supposed.[682] This crisis implies a split between "the world of political and social action and the inner world of spiritual and moral realization."[683] This present crisis has reduced the Muslim tradition to two alternatives: either Islam as a pious private feeling or Islam as a political struggle to attain power.[684] Neither of these is satisfactory. Allawi asserts that in order to shape modernity in a way that is acceptable to them, Muslims should draw from its spirituality

[681] Cf. "Ali Allawi", accessed December 27, 2011, http://www.aliallawi.com/.

[682] Cf. Ali A. Allawi, *The Crisis of Islamic Civilization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 249.

[683] Cf. Ibid., xi.

[684] Cf. Ibid., 251.

and metaphysics. These sources will allow Muslims to shape a Muslim culture, a Muslim civilization that brings it back to public life.[685]

Allawi affirms that every civilization is shaped by a particular balance in two distinct dimensions: a balance between the individual and the collective and a between this-worldliness and other-worldliness.[686] In particular, the Islamic civilization is based on a reconciled and harmonious understanding of the secular and the profane, so any claim of autonomous action by humans is ultimately derived from God who bestows reason on humans.[687] Moreover, the individual is seen as generating his personal virtues from the community and at the same time nourishing it. These ethical and virtuous dimensions are rooted in God himself.[688] It is from this idea of the *Homo Islamicus* that Allawi wants to rebuild the Islamic civilization.

Allawi's view of the relationship between religion and society wants to take as its basis the "privileged place for the sacred in the structuring of the Islamic political order."[689] He therefore rejects the simplistic idea of the superiority and universality of western

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[685] Cf. Ibid., 257; "the thread of the argument which runs throughout the book is that Islamic civilization, almost by definition, has to acknowledge the role of the transcendent... in its make up. If that element is absent, then Islam cannot be forced into the dynamics of modernity without its integrity being affected." Ibid., xiv.

[686] Cf. Allawi, *The Crisis of Islamic Civilization*, 2.

[687] Cf. Ibid., 11.

[688] Cf. Ibid., 12ff.

[689] Ibid., 185.

values.[690] For Allawi they are based in a sharp separation between the secular and the profane, the private and the public, which is alien to the Islamic tradition.[691] He also rejects some Muslim reform movements like Muslim Democracy[692] because they propose to think politics independently from religious belief and reduce religion to the private sphere. Allawi's proposal is not entirely clear and is actually rather tentative. He affirms that, because the Muslim tradition is a complete way of life, the state in Islamic civilization should respect and reflect the "pre-eminence of Islam" because the institutions should draw their legitimacy from Islam.[693] In Islamic civilization, sovereignty is attributed to God alone, although it should be implemented through human agency.[694] He also asserts that there is a consensus in Sunni and Shia Islam about the role of the state in implementing the divine commands through the *Shari'a*.[695] Allawi resonates with modern calls to recover the figure of the caliphate, although he rejects a purely political caliph.[696] The caliph has for him a more religious role as leader of the Islamic community and guarantor of the religious

[690] Cf. Ibid., 172.

[691] Cf. Ibid., 160.

[692] Muslim Democracy is a movement founded by the former prime minister of Malaysia which seeks to have a similar role to Christian Democracy in postwar Europe. Cf. Ibid., 184.

[693] Ibid., 158.

[694] Cf. Ibid., 171.

[695] Cf. Ibid., 161.

[696] Cf. Ibid., 164; "nevertheless, the existence of a caliphate has been integral to the idea of Islamic civilization." Ibid., 165.

law.[697] For him the caliph would be "the symbol of the unique nature of Muslim order, reflecting the supremacy of *Shari'a* law and thus underlining the supremacy of divinely inspired decrees over all other human considerations."[698]

Although Allawi seems to be proposing a very traditional view of the Islamic tradition, at bottom he is actually proposing an Islamic alternative to the Western political order, one based in Muslim traditions.[699] The development of this alternative model was frustrated by the colonial expansion of the West.[700] Because the Muslim *Umma* does not correspond to a state, Allawi is thinking of another type of political and international presence of Muslims. The role of the Muslim communities would be based on faith and moral authority.[701] At some point he seems to present the role of the Catholic Church at the U.N as a possible inspiration for this new role of Islam.[702]

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[697] "The caliphate became the symbol of the unique nature of Muslim order, reflecting the supremacy of Sharia law and thus underlining the supremacy of divinely inspired decrees over all other human considerations."Allawi, *The Crisis of Islamic Civilization*, 164.

[698] Ibid., 164.

[699] "Rediscovering or developing the political basis of a new Islamic civilization has to take place in this context. The question becomes whether there is wholesale acceptance of the West's definition of universal values and acknowledgment that Islam must move towards adopting them, or whether Islam should continue to seek the meaning of the universal – including that in political values and institutions—in its own legacy." Ibid., 184.

[700] "But the rapidity with which the Muslim states retreated, and then collapsed, in the face of western powers made it impossible to evolve these traditional Islamic forms of rule and government in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries." Ibid., 159.

[701] Cf. Ibid., 147.

[702] Cf. Ibid., 156.

Allawi does not consider pluralism to be a major element of modern societies. Implicitly he is thinking of societies where Muslims have been an historic majority,[703] societies which are able to fully implement the Islamic civilization. He seems to endorse the traditional Islamic approach to the other as "people of the book," Jews and Christians, as a form of actual toleration.[704] Regarding the situation of Muslim minorities in non-Muslim societies,[705] such as contemporary Europe, Allawi acknowledges that the present evolution of *Shari'a* allows for Muslims to live outside countries shaped by Muslim culture. He nevertheless establishes a condition: Muslims should be able to preserve their faith and their Muslim identity.[706]

### 6. CONCLUSION

As we can see, the reflections of these five authors are situated at different levels and it would be unrealistic to consider them as perfectly parallel reflections. Sachedina and Nurcholish develop a speculative and sophisticated theological reflection on the sources of Islam. An-Na'im shows a deep knowledge of the Islamic juridical tradition from which he reflects on the role of *Shari'a* in modern societies. Ramadan and Allawi write from a less speculative level of reflection pointing out the cultural and civilizational differences

[703] Cf. Ibid., 174.

[704] Allawi points out that in the first centuries of Islam, in the regions recently conquered the vast majority of the population ultimately converted to Islam, cf. Ibid.

[705] Islam distinguished between *Dar-al-Islam* (land of peace), Islamic territories, and *Dar-al-Harb* (land of struggle), non Islamic territories. Traditionally Muslims were not allowed to establish themselves outside *Dar-al-Islam*. Allawi affirms that today scholars distinguish a third category: the conditional authorization to remain in non-Islamic lands. Cf. Ibid., 177.

[706] Cf. Ibid., 176.

between Western modernity and Islam and voicing their desires for future developments. However, we cannot restrict our view on the Islamic tradition to the more sophisticated authors, like Sachedina or An-Na'im. These authors reflect a very sophisticated Islamic thought in dialogue with Western philosophy and theology, which is far away from common Muslim views. Voices like Ramadan and Allawi, at the same time that they are open to Western values, help us listen to common Muslim demands for modernity. When widening the range of authors considered, I am following Sachedina's advice to open the debate about Islam and modern values beyond the limits of an "ivory tower intellectual elitism."[707]

Clearly Islamic thinking is much broader and more complex than the small example we present here. Nevertheless, considering the great variety of origins and positions among Muslims that these five authors represent, we can still arrive at some important conclusions in our approach to Islamic social thinking. Regarding this, a major finding of this investigation is that all five authors reject a purely political view of the Islamic tradition. They reject a view of social life where the only possible social organization should be the implementation of *Shari'a* and the *dhimma* system over society.[708] Islamic thinking is, thus, compatible with modern pluralistic democracy, although it is still struggling to fully

[707] Cf. Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights*, 21.

[708] For example: "Considering the present state of our societies, to apply the *Shari'a* from the starting point of an institutional penal code is tantamount to taking the wrong way twice... Above all, it is betraying the scope of the Qur'ânic message which makes social justice the priority of all legislative activity. Hence from the moment we admit that we are engaged according to our individual and collective abilities in an actualization of the *Shari'a*, it is necessary that we fix the priority of a greater social justice." Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*, 50.

integrate this reality within its tradition.[709] An actual example of this conclusion is the reality of the *Pancasila* political system in Indonesia within which Nurcolish Majid reflects.[710]

In the cases of Majid, Sachedina and An-Na'im, this integration is explicit and they actually reread Muslim sources in order to propose actual integration of these values in the Islamic tradition. In the case of Ramadan and Allawi, they do not actually challenge Muslim sources from these modern values, although they admit that some work should be done in this sense.[711] We can see here the lower level of speculation whence they approach the Muslim sources. However, the integration is still implicitly present because, ultimately, both thinkers accept as a starting point the main values of modern pluralistic democracy although they try to challenge them. These authors represent, then, two main approaches to modern Islamic social values. On the one hand, we detect a more radical approach to Islam (in the sense of going to the roots) that confronts Muslim sources with modern political values. On the other hand, we find a more cultural approach which, without denying these

[709] A good example of this struggle in Islam in order to integrate democracy and pluralism inside the tradition is the recent declaration of the *shaykh* of the *Al-Azhar* university in Cairo defending, from a Muslim point of view, a bill of rights for Egypt, cf. "Al-Azhar Sheikh Proposes Bill of Rights for Egypt," January 11, 2012, http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/01/11/187626.html.

[710] However, the *Pancasila* system also has its limitation: "[I]n its emphasis on the belief in one supreme God, *Pancasila* limits nontheistic rationales for citizenship and belonging. Moreover, in recognizing only five main religions, the *Pancasila* attempts to impose artificial and narrow uniformity among highly diverse Indonesian identities, seeking to force some four hundred ethnic and language groups into five categories of religion." An-Na'im, *Toward an Islamic Reformation*, 259.

[711] Sachedina affirms that there is a consensus among Muslim scholars, fundamentalist or not, on the need to deepen what religious pluralism means for Islam. The difference for him is in the various ways they use the Muslim tradition and the application of *ijtihâd*. Cf. Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism*, 133. Although Ramadan and Allawi speak about the need of *ijtihâd*, their use of the Islamic sources is rather uncritical.

modern values, is concerned with the integrity of Muslim civilizational expressions in dialogue with modern political values. Sachedina, Nurcholish and An-Na'im would belong to the first group, and Ramadan and Allawi to the second.

Among the authors with a more radical approach, we see a common approach to the Muslim sources: these values are already present in the foundational Islamic texts: the task today is to find them. The way they develop this leads them to three different ways of integrating modern values: presenting a more privatized understanding of the Muslim tradition (Nurcholish), interpreting this tradition in the framework of John Rawl's thought (An-Na'im), and pushing John Rawls' framework in order to allow a more explicitly religious presence of the Muslim faith in society (Sachedina).

Among the authors with a more cultural approach to the Muslim tradition there is also a common approach to its sources. They consider modern social values as positive. However, they both affirm that these modern political values suppose a particular historical worldview, related to the west, which leads to a negative prejudice against Muslim sources. The task of Muslims today is to unfold the alternative reading of these values naturally embedded in the Islamic tradition. This alternative reading of the values can be found also in the type of societies which Muslim culture has historically developed. Both Ramadan and Allawi have a positive approach to modern pluralistic values. Allawi asserts, for example, that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights "was a praiseworthy project in many ways." He asserts especially that the Declaration "[sets] standards which would later

confront the world of Islam with a definition of universal rights."[712] In turn, Ramadan asserts that "the Declaration of 1948 is a point of reference from which we can derive today basic, general principles which go along the lines of respect for human dignity."[713] Nevertheless, both demand continuing reflection on the meaning of these major concepts in order to go beyond the present Western rationale behind them. Their goal is to enrich the meaning of human rights and pluralism with the Islamic understanding of them.[714] Islamic worldviews should also contribute to their development in the future. Toward this end, each author proposes a different path of action. Allawi suggest a more cultural-spiritual program of development for Islamic civilization where the goal is to enter deeply into Islamic spirituality and values in order to move toward new understandings of the Muslim tradition. Ramadan proposes a more political one where the goal is to confront the injustices produced by modernity from grassroots groups shaped by Islamic identity.

The position of these two authors, however, poses problems for us because of their lack of critical approach to Muslim sources when reinterpreting the major concepts of modern democracy from Islamic thought. Both authors, at different moments in their reflection, reach views on the religion-society relationship contradictory to modern democratic and pluralistic values. For example, on the one hand, Ramadan, when stating

[712] Allawi, *The Crisis of Islamic Civilization*, 192.

[713] Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*, 99.

[714] "A new consensus on human rights has to develop from an inter-civilizational exchange, which would include all the world's religions and civilizations in order to generate a new Universal Declaration of Human Rights." Allawi, *The Crisis of Islamic Civilization*, 190; in turn, Ramadan speaking of human rights affirms that "[t]he important thing, and this is so in each culture, is to set in motion the movement that allows approach of the respective models which enable the application of fundamental rights." Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*, 102.

the principles inherent to the Qur'ânic concept of *shûrâ* or consultation, asserts that the president of the nation "must respect the principles of the Islamic reference."[715] This ambiguous expression could lead to the imposition of Islam on the whole of society. On the other hand, Allawi affirms that "[i]n Islam it is neither possible nor desirable to build an edifice of power and authority divorced from the revealed commandments of God."[716] Although Allawi rejects a purely juridical implementation of *Shari'a,*[717] it is difficult to imagine how his thought can integrate the idea of a secular and pluralistic society.

We initially phrased a first question for our research: is public theology possible in societies where Muslim communities are present? In spite of the difficulties and contradiction that still exist, the overview of these Islamic thinkers shows us that modern Muslim authors in dialogue with Western political philosophy consider it possible. What is more, these Islamic thinkers are themselves trying to develop some kind of Islamic public theology. Regarding this first question, a reference point could be An-Na'im's thought, and his idea of civic reason as the most promising way to argue in public. It is a reference because, of the authors we have seen, he is the one who explicitly formulates a concrete way, which he considers acceptable for Muslims, in which particular religions can intervene in social issues. An-Na'im's view is the fruit of his particular hermeneutic of the Islamic sources and it is not accepted by all Muslims. However, we should admit that his is

[715] Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*, 84.

[716] Allawi, *The Crisis of Islamic Civilization*, 161.

[717] Cf. Ibid., 166.

the most sophisticated reflection on the religion-society relationship of all the authors we have seen.

However, the claims voiced by Ramadan and Allawi, demanding a more reciprocal influence between modern values and Islamic worldview, invite us to seek for ways to introduce the religious argument that allows it to be more freely present. Therefore, after answering this first question, we can now pass to our second one. This question could be phrased thus: how can we design more precisely the type of argument that public theology would use in a society with a significant presence of Muslim communities?

## III. Addressing the Other: Building the Public theology Argument

### 1. A Reference Point: An-Na'im's Civic Reason

Among the five Muslim authors considered here, we find one very clear and precise proposal regarding how religions can intervene in public life and address social issues: An-Na'im's proposal of civic reason. Thus, we will take the original proposal of this particular Muslim author as the starting point for our reflection on the way to building a public theology argument which could be addressed to Muslims.

We have seen how An-Na'im considers the secular state as the best way to organize society even for the Islamic tradition. He then considers that the actual shape of the secular state is not predetermianted but needs to be negotiated for every society. This negotiation should integrate the religious arguments so that the Muslim tradition and *shari'a* can also shape public life. Therefore, An-Na'im proposes a way for religions to participate in the

public debate. He introduces then what he calls civic reason, a reasoning that citizens can accept or reject without reference to religious beliefs as such.[718] The context for the use of this civic reason is a debate on social issues shaped by the virtues of civility, mutual respect and discretion. This debate should avoid questions of religious doctrines or practices.[719] As stated above, An-Na'im is presenting an Islamic reading of the late John Rawls' view on the role of religion in public life and the requirement of the proviso.

One apt initial observation is that An-Na'im's proposal is a good one and fully acceptable when we look at it from the public theology current understood as a style of theology, as presented in the first chapter. Public theology as, in Breitenberg's words, "a theologically informed discourse about public issues," can be conducted fully adequate and expressed within the conditions of An-Na'im's civic reason. Public theology can develop its arguments accompanying the religious insights with non-explicitly religious arguments, so it is fully intelligible and even open to refutation by everyone in society.

However, I would like to try to push An-Na'im's views a bit further. Three reasons motivate me to do so. In the first place, the claim present in some of the Muslim authors proposed not just to integrate modern secular values into the Muslim tradition, but to contribute to the development of these values from Muslim grounds. Ramadan and Allawi speak this way.[720] In both cases, the emphasis is placed on Muslim's more integrated

[718] Cf. An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State*, 100.

[719] Cf. Ibid., 270.

[720] "The fact that Islam did not participate in the evolution of modernity does not imply that it cannot participate, or even lead, in the resolution of the crises which are plaguing the world by positing an alternative

understanding of the sacred and the profane.[721] The position of these two more culture-based Islamic authors suggests that An-Na'im's view, although very reasonable, may not be fully expressing Muslim's more profound claims. Therefore, it may fall short as a point of departure for exchanging religious arguments on social issues. Sachedina's critique of the Rawlsian view and his demand for a clearer religious discourse in public go in the same direction.[722] This shaping of modern secular values by the Islamic tradition can be easily welcomed from the Christian perspective. The Jesuit Christian Troll speaks of dialogue as "a process of shared learning, involving patience and careful attentiveness, but also open and critical questioning of each other and, occasionally, energetic protest."[723] Troll for example asserts that Christians in secularized societies could learn much from Muslims about the public expression and witness of faith.[724]

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vision for the future. This vision would be drawn from Islam's own essence as a religion, as a spiritualized world view and as a metaphysics which emphasizes the element of balance in the ordering of lives and relationships of human beings." Allawi, *The Crisis of Islamic Civilization*, 257. "The West has given us a particular form of modernity, it partakes of its history and points of reference. Another civilization can, from within, fix and determine the stakes in a different fashion. This is the case of Islam at the end of this twentieth century." Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*, 7–8.

[721] "What the reformers or critics of Islam failed to acknowledge is that the spiritual dimension of Islam has [embedded] the entirety of its civilization. Almost by definition, therefore, any starting point for revitalizing the world of Islam must begin with Muslim's connection with the transcendent reality which lies at the heart of the message of Islam. Regaining knowledge of the sacred is an essential requirement for this." Allawi, *The Crisis of Islamic Civilization*, 10. "[T]he comprehension of 'the religious' here does not cover what is meant by the same in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. The spheres of the religious and the rational, the sacred and the profane are defined differently. They do not have the same limits, and they are articulated very specifically from one tradition to another." Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*, 79.

[722] Cf. Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights*, 224 note 12; cf. also Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism*, 77.

[723] Troll, *Dialogue and Difference*, 2.

[724] "[I]n the anonymity of secularized societies do people not need the confident witness of believers, not least through the public and communal expression of their religious convictions? This is a wide field, in which there is much for Christians to learn from believing Muslims." Ibid., 32.

In the second place, An-Na'im's preference for limiting the dialogue to issues of public policy, although prudent, could be challenged from a viewpoint of interreligious dialogue. Instead of seeking a neutral and aseptic exchange, it is better to acknowledge the dynamics present at the bottom of every interreligious encounter.[725] In this sense, David Tracy, in *Dialogue with the Other,* asserts that for an interreligious dialogue to be genuine, the question or subject matter we are considering should be allowed to take over the dialogue and not the interlocutors themselves.[726] He also speaks of the need of self-exposure in the dialogue with the other.[727] In this sense he affirms that a theologian enters interreligious dialogue not as a cultural anthropologist or even a philosopher. A theologian enters the dialogue as a "committed Christian theologian", therefore wishing to seek for truth.[728]

Finally, I clearly perceive in the Islamic thinkers we have considered a lack of knowledge about the Christian understanding of society and the state. This view tends to be conflated with a purely secular and Western view.[729] Tariq Ramadan himself admits this

[725] "[D]ialogue involves a two-way process in which each partner is engaged in a process of not only informing but also convincing the other of the truth of his or her beliefs and practices." Catherine Cornille, *The Im-possibility of Interreligious Dialogue* (New York: Crossroad, 2008), 71.

[726] Tracy, *Dialogue with the Other*, 95.

[727] Cf. Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 446.

[728] Tracy, *Dialogue with the Other*, 73.

[729] "The response in the West has been to accept the process of secularization as an inevitable consequence of the general increase in wealth and power. The same recipe is now being offered to Islam. Reformers, both in the Muslim world and outside, are, in effect, calling for a 'Christianization' of Islam, a final break between the sacred and the profane in the world of Islam." Allawi, *The Crisis of Islamic Civilization*, 271.

confusion.[730] Therefore, any effort to introduce more explicitly the religious argument on a social issue will greatly help to introduce the rationale and nuances behind the Christian understanding of these issues.[731]

### 2. SOME REFLECTIONS FROM THE FIELD OF INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

An-Na'im's proposal, being very original and valuable, falls short of affording all the space that the dialogue between Muslims and Christians requires. An-Na'im's view is clearly proposed in rather juridical terms. Because we are talking about the encounter between two religious traditions, a more theological approach is necessary. I propose to enlighten our reflections with some insights coming from the field of interreligious dialogue. This will help us see the efforts of public theology in light of the broader efforts of interreligious dialogue. Acknowledging my own approach to these issues, I will draw my reflections from the Catholic tradition on interreligious dialogue. This is coherent with the Catholic approach to the issues that is taken in this dissertation. Moreover, the comprehensive approach of these documents gives us a quite holistic and synthetic view of the issues at stake in interreligious dialogue.

The effort of public theologians in addressing other religions in order to build a more just society follows the line introduced in the Second Vatican Council of a more

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[730] "Muslims, very often, confuse the West with the Christian world." Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*, 182.

[731] Regarding this, it is illuminating to quote David Hollenbach who, developing a dialogue between Catholic Social Teaching and liberalism, affirms: "The church has not simply taken over liberal ideas uncritically, but is putting its own interpretation on them and has begun to develop its own distinctive understanding of the meaning and purpose of democracy." Hollenbach, "Afterword: a Community of Freedom," 323.

positive approach to other religions. The Council's document on interreligious dialogue, *Nostra Aetate* affirms that "[t]he Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions."[732] Therefore the Catholic Church "urges her sons to enter with prudence and charity into discussion and collaboration with members of other religions."[733] This collaboration is precisely the goal that public theology is seeking.

Since *Nostra Aetate,* the Catholic magisterium has greatly deepened its understanding of interreligious dialogue following the Council's proposals. One of the clearest results is a pair of major documents of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, the heir of the Council's Secretariat for Non-Christians.[734] These documents are Dialogue and Mission (1984) and Dialogue and Proclamation (1991). Before considering the documents, it is important to appreciate their context and circumstances. Regarding this, in the document Dialogue and Mission the Pontifical Council, twenty years after the creation of the Secretariat for Non-Christians, sought to evaluate the experiences of dialogue of the preceding years. It contains a reflection on the Church's attitude toward other believers, as well as on the connection between dialogue and the mission of the

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[732] *Nostra Aetate* (hereafter NA), 5 in Gioia, *Interreligious Dialogue: The Official Teachings of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)*, 38.

[733] NA, 6 in Ibid., 38; in the case of the relationship with Islam the conciliar document is even more explicit: "The Sacred Council now pleads with all to forget the past, and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding: for the benefit of all men, let them together preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values." Ibid., 39 The use of non-inclusive language is a fruit of the moment the document was written.

[734] "The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue," *The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue*, accessed December 16, 2011, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_pro_20051996_en.html.

Church.[735] The document Dialogue and Proclamation was issued to mark the 25th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate.* The goal of the document is to further develop the integration of interreligious dialogue in the mission of the Church that Dialogue and Mission asserted. It deals then mainly with the articulation of interreligious dialogue and proclamation of the Gospel.[736]

What value should we give to these documents? The documents we are considering do not have the highest magisterial authority in the Catholic Church; they are not papal encyclicals or conciliar constitutions. The document Dialogue and Mission says explicitly that its reflection is "mainly pastoral in character" and that "a further in-depth study by theologians remains both desirable and necessary."[737] Therefore we will consider them as a general orientation, the fruit of the accumulated tradition in interreligious dialogue in the Catholic Church during the last 40 years. As a general orientation they may also be valuable for other Christian denominations. The insights of these documents clearly need to be further developed and deepened. The work of theologians in the field of interreligious dialogue continues to expand and articulate the insights collected in these documents. However, because ultimately we are reflecting from a Catholic point of view, we remain sensitive to the magisterial character of the documents as a guide for theology. Therefore,

[735] Dialogue and Mission, 5 in Gioia, *Interreligious Dialogue: The Official Teachings of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)*, 567.

[736] Dialogue and Proclamation, 3, ibid., 608.

[737] Dialogue and Mission, 6 in ibid., 567.

we take them as an authorized guide and orientation that help us frame the efforts of public theology in order to address other religions.

Firstly, we are affirming that public theology seeks to address other religions with Christian theological arguments in order to build a more just society. We may recognize that as a form of interreligious dialogue. It is important to take into account that such an interreligious effort is not just an isolated goal of a certain group of theologians but ultimately a genuine dimension of the mission of the Church. For the document Dialogue and Mission the mission of the Church is a "complex and articulated reality" which includes various elements, to wit: simple presence and witness, commitment to service of humankind, liturgical and prayer life, interreligious dialogue and proclamation, and catechesis.[738]

Secondly, Dialogue and Mission identified four distinct types of dialogue: dialogue of life, dialogue of works, dialogue of experts and dialogue of religious experience.[739] What public theology proposes corresponds to the so-called dialogue of works or collaboration. This level of dialogue consists in "deeds and collaboration with others for goals of a humanitarian, social, economic, or political nature which are directed toward the liberation and advancement of mankind."[740] Other authors later developed this idea of collaboration as a type of interreligious dialogue. For example, Christian Troll identifies a type of dialogue

[738] Cf. Dialogue and Mission, 13 in ibid., 569–570.

[739] Dialogue and Mission, 28-35 in ibid., 575–577; see also Dialogue and Proclamation, 42 Ibid., 622–623.

[740] Dialogue and Mission, 31 in Gioia, *Interreligious Dialogue: The Official Teachings of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)*, 576.

based on cooperation and he affirms, to cite his own words, that "whereas dialogue, in the forms mentioned above, proceeds on the basis that the partners stand as it were, facing each other, cooperation assumes that they are standing alongside each other, in order to deal together with shared problems."[741] The document identifies the context of international organizations as the primary place where this type of dialogue takes place. The later document Dialogue and Proclamation restates this categorization of different levels in interreligious dialogue but stresses their natural interconnection. Dialogue and Proclamation identifies interreligious dialogue as a major element for "integral development, social justice and human liberation."[742] Moreover, this later document reminds us that the four types of dialogue are interconnected and that the dialogue of works may easily lead us to a theological dialogue or a dialogue of religious experience.[743]

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that interreligious dialogue is an integral part of the mission of the Church. Therefore, it is unrealistic to think of it as a neutral and aseptic encounter between two different traditions. The articulated mission of the Church includes interreligious dialogue but also proclamation. Although the two realities are not

[741] Troll, *Dialogue and Difference*, 21; we can see a similar distinction in Catherine Cornille when she affirms that "[t]hough the term 'interreligious dialogue' is used for many forms of mutual engagement and collaboration between members of different religions, the defining characteristic of such dialogue is thus its grounding within concrete religious traditions." Cornille, *The Im-possibility of Interreligious Dialogue*, 65–66.

[742] Cf. Dialogue and Proclamation, 44 in Gioia, *Interreligious Dialogue: The Official Teachings of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)*, 623.

[743] "It can be seen, moreover, that the different forms are interconnected. Contacts in daily life and common commitment to action will normally open the door for cooperation in promoting human and spiritual values; they may also eventually lead to the dialogue of religious experience in response to the great questions which the circumstances of life do not fail to arouse in the minds of people." Dialogue and Proclamation, 43 in ibid.

interchangeable, nevertheless they are intimately related.[744] The proper attitude to adopt in an interreligious dialogue will be determined by the circumstances.[745] However, because dialogue does not exhaust the mission of the Church, this attitude will always remain oriented toward proclamation, the fullness of the Church's mission.[746] In this sense, the document speaks of the mission of the church as a "dynamic process."[747] In any mutual exchange of information with other religions the Christian always has the duty of "responding to their partners' expectations regarding the content of the Christian faith, of bearing witness to this faith when this is called for, of giving account of the hope that is within them."[748]

Catherine Cornille has developed this idea, asserting that witnessing to the truth of our own faith is a main element of any interreligious dialogue.[749] Cornille wants to reflect on the distinction, although not separation, between dialogue and proclamation that the document Dialogue and Proclamation affirms.[750] In order to do so, Cornille identifies some

[744] Cf. Dialogue and Proclamation, 77 in ibid., 637.

[745] Dialogue and Proclamation, 78 in ibid., 637.

[746] Cf. Dialogue and Proclamation, 82 in ibid., 639.

[747] Cf. Dialogue and Proclamation, 82 in ibid.

[748] Dialogue and Proclamation, 82 in ibid., 640.

[749] Cornille wants to go beyond a mere exchange of information about each other's religion and open the possibility of mutual fecundation and transformation. For her this requires an attitude to witnessing to the other. "Witnessing thus constitutes an essential component of all inter-religious dialogue. It requires commitment to a particular religion, and a genuine conviction of the validity and truth of its teachings." Catherine Cornille, "The Role of Witness in Inter-religious Dialogue," *Concilium*, no. 1 (2011): 61.

[750] Dialogue and Proclamation, 77 in Gioia, *Interreligious Dialogue: The Official Teachings of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)*, 637.

important traits of the witnessing in interreligious dialogue. Not only does it affirm the truth of one's own tradition, but it supposes too, in Cornille's words, "openness to the witness of the other".[751] In contrast with the traditional missionary witness and with the mere exchange of religious information, interreligious dialogue supposes mutual witness. This requires a conviction of the truth of our own tradition,[752] an attitude of humility toward the other,[753] as well as the possibility of change and growth in our own tradition.[754] In a broader sense, Cornille invites us to go beyond the distinction between dialogue and proclamation which could cause confusion in the other because we do not engage fully in dialogue. For her, ultimately, we should move toward a more robust understanding of dialogue. In this new understanding "fullness of dialogue may be regarded as a form of mutual proclamation in which participants alternately adopt the roles of missionary and seeker."[755]

These reflections from interreligious dialogue help us go beyond An-Na'im's proposal of a civic reason. This proposal is mainly social-philosophical in nature. Our goal is to enlighten it with the theological implications of this interreligious collaboration in society. Ultimately any encounter between religions follows some particular dynamics: the encounter is part of the mission of the believer, the encounter may start at a more practical or theoretical level but will always remain open to confronting each one's beliefs, and,

[751] Cornille, "The Role of Witness in Inter-religious Dialogue," 62.

[752] Cf. Ibid., 61.

[753] Cf. Ibid., 62.

[754] Cf. Ibid., 69.

[755] Cornille, *The Im-possibility of Interreligious Dialogue*, 72.

although not explicit, there will always be a certain tension in the dialogue partners because of the desire, even if deeply submerged, to convince the other of the truth.

### 3. Beyond Civic Reason: A Proposal for a Public Theology in Dialogue with Islam

As I have said, An-Na'im's proposal is fully compatible with public theology, understood as a style of theology in a broader sense. However, the correlational model of public theology, although following a similar line, may be offering us a more precise and integrated way to bring in the religious argument. The correlational model deepens more explicitly the way religious symbols and narratives can be brought to the public discussion on social issues. Therefore, it may be a more adequate method to approach the dialogue with Muslims on social issues. On the one hand it offers a clearer space for the religious traditions to confront the political concepts of modern democracy in order to develop them from within. We have seen this claim particularly present in the Muslim world. On the other hand, it reflects better the dynamics that we have seen are in effect in any interreligious dialogue. Moreover, we can identify many similarities between the critical correlational model of public theology and the position of Abdulaziz Sachedina we have seen above. Sachedina, when speaking about the way Muslims can appropriate insights such as the one regarding human rights, asserts that "[r]evelation actually depended on reason for its validity, and reason sought to validate its conclusions by showing their correlation to the revelation."[756] This view of the relationship of reason and revelation from

[756] Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights*, 38.

the inside of the Islamic tradition seems to me very similar to the critical correlation that Tracy proposes in his method.

### *a) A PUBLIC THEOLOGY INSPIRED BY TRACY'S ANALOGICAL IMAGINATION*

#### *i. The Analogical Imagination in Relationship with other Religions*

Curiously, when developing our own thought process in this dissertation, unwittingly we have been following the same path that David Tracy's thought followed. The main author of the critical-correlational model developed his thought beginning from a focus on the dialogue with secular positions. From there he has moved toward the dialogue with other religious traditions as a consequence of his reflection on the public role of theology. This reflects the clear challenges that remain before public theology as well as Tracy's clear and early understanding of it. I will try to reflect here Tracy's own development in order to present the critical-correlational approach to the dialogue with other religions regarding social issues.

Tracy already treated interreligious dialogue in his major work *The Analogical Imagination.* In the epilogue of the book, Tracy foresees coherently the consequences of his critical-correlation method. Systematic theology, for Tracy, consists in establishing mutually critical correlations between interpretations of both situation and event.[757] Therefore, a major trait of the present situation, religious pluralism, demands that we

[757] Cf. Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 447.

establish those correlations also with other religious traditions.[758] In this sense Tracy speaks of pluralism as a real *kairos* which seems to announce a new reality, what he calls "future global humanity."[759]

Tracy identifies two major risks of this context of pluralism: retiring into privacy or adopting a siege and sectarian mentality.[760] In contrast with these perils, Tracy proposes the analogical imagination as the way to face these times. When dealing with interreligious dialogue the analogical imagination is applied in a back-and-forth movement – a conversation—composed of two different stages. There is first a movement of self-respect which springs from a solid self-identity. Subsequently, there is a movement of self-transcendence which consists in a self-exposure to the other.[761] In the movement of self-respect, I deepen into the particularity of my tradition, by a process of intensification, and I pursue more relatively adequate ways of expressing it. In the movement of self-exposure, I listen to the other when he poses questions and confronts my own tradition from the

[758] "The second clue which the history of classical Christian systematics discloses is the reality of pluralism in the situational analyses of theology." Ibid., 449; "as participants in each religious tradition often sense, the journey of an analogical imagination within each tradition and among all the traditions must intensify. For no more than Christian theology can continue to confine its attention to the cognitive crises, the alienations and promises of the Euro-American cultural situation... no longer can Christian theology confine its attention to Christianity alone." Ibid., 449.

[759] Cf. Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 449.

[760] Cf. Ibid., 451.

[761] Cf. Ibid., 446.

classics and focal points of his own tradition.[762] The movement of self-exposure is a demand of real self-respect.

This movement of conversation between traditions will reveal to us the similarities-in-difference between traditions and the actual dissimilarities. The knowledge of these similarities-in-difference allows us to produce real analogies between the traditions and so to get to know the other and get to know our own tradition better.[763] In Tracy's words: "Each of us understands each other through analogy or not at all."[764] Nevertheless, Tracy states a condition for this conversation to be successful. This condition is related to the subject matter of the conversation, the questions that are posed to each tradition. For Tracy, this question should be allowed by the participants to take over and have priority over the responses already made.[765]

This basic scheme regarding how to address the other, introduced at the very end of *The Analogical Imagination* remains key in Tracy's thought. His last book, *Dialogue with the Other,*[766] a work entirely dedicated to inter-religious dialogue, is more than an application of the previous scheme to certain cases. In this book he also seeks the

[762] Cf. Ibid., 453.

[763] Cf. Ibid.

[764] Ibid., 447.

[765] Cf. Ibid., 452.

[766] Tracy, *Dialogue with the Other*.

confirmation of this scheme with some major authors in the field.[767] For example, chapter 4 of *Dialogue with the Other* is, ultimately, a great example of the scheme of *The Analogical Imagination* applied to the dialogue with Buddhism.

*Dialogue with the Other* is ultimately a retrieval of his previous insight in a much more confident way after years of actual dialogue with Judaism and Buddhism. The starting point is still the idea that the present situation imposes over theology the need to establish critical-correlations with a situation marked by religious pluralism.[768] Perhaps the major innovation introduced in *Dialogue with the Other* is the reinterpretation of his method in theology. Tracy now openly calls his method a hermeneutic. He finds it now in the categories of mystical and prophetical.[769] He also introduces an acknowledgement that the result of interreligious dialogue supposes change and transformation in each religion.[770] The two moments in the interpretation of the religious classics in *Analogical Imagination* – manifestation and proclamation—now become the mystical and the prophetical. The mystical moment consists in the experience of the ineffable ultimate realities of our tradition. The prophetic moment consists in the effort to proclaim these ultimate realities

[767] We can see the continuity with his previous works in Tracy's explicit assertions that he is developing an "analogical imagination" which could be used to envision religious pluralism. Cf. Ibid., 42.

[768] Cf. Ibid., 1 curiously, as a proof of this new pluralism Tracy speaks of the Catholic Church becoming a world Church as we saw Rahner defended.

[769] "But I now see more clearly - thanks to the inter-religious dialogue... that, in practice and thereby in theory, this pervasive religious dialectic of manifestation and proclamation is best construed theologically as mystical-prophetic." Ibid., 7.

[770] "One should, nonetheless, dwell there long enough to allow the truth of the other to become, somewhere along the spectrum, a genuine possibility for oneself, in however transformed a form. To understand at all is to understand differently. To understand at all is to understand for and within genuine dialogue allowing real manifestations of the other's truth and thereby mutual transformation." Ibid., 44.

and their ethico-political implications.[771] Tracy sees a dialectic going on between these two new categories. The articulation between these two dimensions will show us how a religion can allow other traditions to confront it in order to probe more deeply its own main insight, and, at the same time, defend strong ethical exigencies in society.

### *ii. Challenge to the Analogical Imagination*

This development of Tracy's critical correlational method toward interreligious dialogue is very insightful. Nevertheless, we should still remain aware of some possible objections to the use of Tracy's method as the framework for interreligious dialogue that the experience in this field may show us.

First of all, it must be noted that Tracy's analogical imagination is not the only method for interreligious dialogue. There are other proposals regarding how to address the other and evaluate her truth. The field of comparative theology may offer us other hermeneutical stances different from Tracy's. For example, Wesley Wildman and Robert Neville, after conducting a research project on comparative religious ideas, formulated a method for its endeavor based on comparison. Comparison is generally considered an inadequate good method of knowledge because it presumes to shape the other religions to ours. However, Neville and Wildman assert that, when properly exposed to constant

[771] Cf. for example ibid., 100ff.

correction, comparison is, in their words, "a cognitive enterprise aiming to produce true and important knowledge."[772]

Moreover, Catherine Cornille, in her book *The Im-possibility of Interreligious Dialogue,* develops a holistic reflection on interreligious dialogue. This comprehensive view gives us some further hints on how to evaluate Tracy's method. Cornille identifies, thus, a set of necessary virtues at the bottom of the conditions of possibilities for interreligious dialogue,[773] to wit: humility, commitment to our own tradition, interconnection and empathy and hospitality. It is not evident how Tracy's abstract method of analogical imagination can fulfill all these concrete conditions of possibility for interreligious dialogue.

Cornille also identifies change and growth as the main goals of any interreligious dialogue.[774] Tracy's analogical imagination, at least in its original formulation, seems to remain mostly in the moment of acknowledging the similarities-in-difference between religions. However, it is not clear what should happen subsequently. In addition, public

[772] Robert Cummings Neville and Wesley J. Wildmand, "On Comparing Religious Ideas," in *Ultimate Realities: A Volume in the Comparative Religious Ideas Project* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 187.

[773] "In this book, I frame these conditions for a constructive and enriching dialogue between religions in terms of a series of virtues that, however, point to deeper doctrinal and epistemological demands." Cornille, *The Im-possibility of Interreligious Dialogue*, 4.

[774] "[I]t is only through openness to other traditions and to the possibility of change and growth that traditions may themselves hope to gain from the dialogue and secure the continued commitment of those engaged in the adventure of interreligious dialogue." Ibid., 94; "the ultimate goal of dialogue is growth in the truth, not only for disparate individuals who have the capacity and the luxury to engage in such dialogue, but for the tradition itself." Ibid., 73.

theology has not reflected much on the possibility of change and growth in our own religion caused by the encounter with other traditions when dialoguing on social issues.

In what follows we will, nevertheless, use David Tracy's construct of the analogical imagination as a framework for the conversation that public theology seeks to implement with other religions in pluralist societies, particularly with Islam. We acknowledge the existence of other ways of framing this dialogue. Nevertheless, the option for Tracy's analogical imagination will allow us to maintain a coherence within the methodology of public theology argument due to Tracy's comprehensive method. Tracy offers us a method for, on one hand, correlating religious symbols and narratives with secular insights and, on the other, establishing a dialogue between our religious insights and those of other religions. This establishes his work as a privileged stand point from which to build a public theology.

Moreover, Tracy's analogical imagination can withstand in light of the objections we have presented. Regarding this, first of all, Tracy's analogical imagination plays an important role in Cornille's comprehensive view of interreligious dialogue. Tracy's method is a way to implement the virtue of commitment to the tradition while remaining open to the other.[775] The idea of similarities-in-difference is a particular way to express Cornille's virtue of interconnection of religions.[776] And the use of analogy fosters a program of

[775] Cf. Cornille, *The Im-possibility of Interreligious Dialogue*, 92.

[776] Cf. Ibid., 133.

developing the virtue of empathy.[777] Moreover, Tracy's understanding of analogical imagination among religions supposes the recognition of truth in the other religion. The analogical imagination is a way to enter into contact with classics of the other religion, which, as is the case with any classic, conveys a truth about life. Therefore, for Tracy, other religions necessarily convey a message of truth.[778] This characteristic of the analogical imagination corresponds to Cornille's virtue of hospitality. This virtue reflects the recognition of the truth of the other and is a main element of interreligious dialogue for Cornille.[779]

Therefore, Tracy's analogical imagination would be one path of interreligious dialogue which can fulfill several of Cornille's conditions of possibility for this dialogue. Cornille's view draws from her own practical experience in interreligious dialogue. She presents a broader and more integral understanding of this practice which reveals some underdeveloped dimensions of Tracy's thought. However, it is clear that Tracy's view is not in contradiction with Cornille's. This justifies following Tracy's analogical imagination in spite of the existence of other methods like the one of comparison we have mentioned.

Secondly, we can perceive in Tracy a development that integrates Cornille's main claim for positing change and growth as the main goals of interreligious dialogue. This

[777] Cf. Ibid., 150.

[778] Cf. Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 450–451.

[779] "When all the necessary conditions are fulfilled, the possibility of interreligious dialogue still ultimately depends on the ability of one religion to recognize truth in the other." Cornille, *The Im-possibility of Interreligious Dialogue*, 177.

development runs from his first position in *Analogical Imagination* to his position in *Dialogue with the Other.* In this development Tracy has considered more closely the effect on oneself of the conversation with the other. Already in *Analogical Imagination* Tracy discreetly points to this possibility of change.[780] Later on, in *Plurality and Ambiguity,* he developed largely the role and need of a critical reading of religion that unveils its ambiguities.[781] This critical approach to our own religion inevitably supposes change. Finally, in *Dialogue with the Other,* in the same direction, Tracy goes beyond the mere acknowledging of similarities-in-difference between religions. He speaks now of genuine transformation in a religion due to the encounter with the other.[782] This transformation means mostly reinterpretations of one's own tradition in light of new questions.[783]

Regarding the comprehensive set of virtues relating to interreligious dialogue that Cornille proposes, it is easy to recognize that the scope of Prof. Cornille's work is wider than ours because we are limiting our reflection to the way that theological arguments on social issues can be built. Introducing the virtues here supposes moving from a focus on the argument to a focus on the person who argues. This is a very interesting question for public

[780] "If we converse, it is likely we will both be changed as we focus upon the subject matter itself -- the fundamental questions and the classical responses in our tradition." Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 455.

[781] "Our best critical theories, on this reading, should always inform our reading of the classics but not be allowed to take over that conversation… Resistance to the classics can also be as necessary a response in any conversation with them as any recognition of their greatness." Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity*, 69.

[782] "One should, nonetheless, dwell there long enough to allow the truth of the other to become, somewhere along the spectrum, a genuine possibility for oneself, in however transformed a form. To understand at all is to understand differently. To understand at all is to understand for and within genuine dialogue allowing real manifestations of the other's truth and thereby mutual transformation." Tracy, *Dialogue with the Other*, 44.

[783] "Each dialogue is likely to make it possible to revise aspects of the tradition which need revision and to discover other forgotten, indeed often repressed, aspects of the great tradition." Ibid., 98; cf. also ibid., 76.

theology, and it may integrate other points like An-Na'im's reference to virtues of the public dialogue we have already mentioned.[784] However this is a question that requires further study and which falls outside the horizon of our present efforts.

### *iii. An Example of "Dialogue with the Other"*

Tracy in his *Dialogue with the Other* focuses mostly on the Christian-Buddhist dialogue, the one he has been practicing. He introduces, thus, an example of how his analogical imagination can function in dialogue with other religions. He takes the example of the Christian and Buddhist conceptions of the self.[785] He begins acknowledging the differences: Buddhists do not have a formal theory about the self, or rather about the no-self, but there is "a realization of emptiness and dependent co-origination and thereby no self."[786] Buddhists experience this no-self through practices such as meditation. In turn, Christians, like Jews and Muslims, because of the prophetic character of their religion, affirm the existence of a self, who is a responsible self before God's covenant.[787]

Tracy finds then an analogy between Christianity and Buddhism in terms of the self. For Christians, we should be free from the world, and thus from the self, in order to work for the world.[788] In the mystical tradition they speak about the freedom from the self.[789]

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[784] Cf. An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State*, 270.

[785] Cf. Tracy, *Dialogue with the Other*, 74ff.

[786] Ibid., 75.

[787] Cf. Ibid., 78–79.

[788] Cf. Ibid., 79.

Buddhists, in turn, assert that we should not cling to the ego, but to reach enlightenment, we should ultimately not cling even to the non-ego or non-clinging.[790] There is, therefore, a similarity-in-difference between freeing ourselves from the world in order to work for the world and the need not to cling to the negation of the self in order to reach enlightenment. For Tracy, an analogical imagination nourished by this correlation may be particularly enlightening for Christianity. It can helps us confront the western liberal ideal of a "possessive individualism" and "a purely autonomous, non-relational self"[791] which is at the root of the present perception of cultural crisis.[792]

Tracy has not attempted to apply his method to the dialogue with the Muslim tradition but it would be possible for us to outline an example which can illuminate our way forward. We can take, for example, the case of the veil worn by Muslim women. Veiling cannot be considered a purely Muslim matter. The use of the veil is rather a cultural expression present among some muslims. There is not sufficient base for it in the *Qur'ân* and it is not practiced in all Muslim communities. Moreover, veiling is many times used ideologically by some Islamist groups. However, this issue is very much present in the dialogues with Muslims in contemporary Europe, and for this reason, one of our authors, Tariq Ramadan, uses it to develop his dialogue between the Islamic tradition and modernity. Therefore, I will employ it as an example upon which reflect to illustrate our

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[789] Cf. Ibid., 76.

[790] Cf. Ibid., 79.

[791] Ibid., 77.

[792] Cf. Ibid., 74.

argument. A first and most important thing to do is to critically correlate Islamic practices toward women with major principles like their equal dignity with males and their human rights, as well as with mainstream Western feminism's claims. An example of this correlation is the present development of what has been called Islamic feminism.[793] This correlation should lead us to claim a freedom for women to wear the veil or not to wear it and the proper education of women and their families in order to be able to exercise that freedom.[794] Tariq Ramadan asserts that, ultimately, these claims for the freedom to wear the veil and recognition of women's dignity are not in contradiction with the Islamic tradition. These claims rather help us recover some main elements of the purest Muslim tradition. These elements are the Qur'ânic verse which says "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (Q 2:256),[795] and the important role of women in the first Muslim community that Muslim *Hadith* recognizes.[796]

But then the veil, when freely worn, "must express an exacting and moral presence on the plane of social activity. It marks a limit in the proximity of which man understands that the woman – a fortiori one who is socially active – is a being before God."[797] Although in the Christian tradition there is no custom refering to the use of veil for women apart from

[793] Cf. "International Congress on Islamic Feminism", 2008, http://feminismeislamic.org/home/.

[794] In these reflections I follow Tariq Ramadan's view on the topic of the veil. Cf. Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*, 53ff.

[795] Ibid., 53.

[796] "At one time women used to trade, and participate in meetings; they were even in charge of the market at [Medina] under Caliph Umar." Ibid., 56; However, in a rather ambiguous way, Ramadan asserts that these changes in the social role of gender should respect the Muslim priority of the family. Cf. Ibid.

[797] Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*, 57.

religious services, it is easy to find analogies between this interpretation of the wearing of the veil and certain assertions of the Christian tradition about respect for women.[798] These correlations may shape in us an analogical imagination. In turn, this imagination may help us oppose many present situations of disrespect for women's dignity in modern societies. Examples of this disrespect include highly sexualized advertising, sexual harassment at work, and violence against women.

*b) Other Necessary Resources to Address the Other*

We have already seen how Tracy tends to remain overly speculative and how the practical consequences of his position for a public theology are not always clear. Moreover, we have seen how there is a difficulty in the encounter with Muslims caused by the incomplete process of integration in the Muslim tradition of major concepts of modern political philosophy such as human rights or religious pluralism. Tracy's analogical imagination may risk falling into a speculative reflection upon the similarities and differences between religions without really addressing the social issues at stake. It may also be pushed toward a position where we end up denying important political liberties.

Therefore, we should seek other resources in the current of public theology that will help us develop the Tracian paradigm in order to address these challenges. To this end, I propose to enlighten Tracy's hermeneutical framework with two other important concepts: Public religion and the pluralistic understanding of the common good. These concepts are both present in the public theology current and can be connected with some elements of

[798] For example Ex 20:17; Prov 31:10-31; Mt 5:27-30; Eph 5:25-33

Tracy's hermeneutical stance. One implies the pre-conditions for a religious community to enter into this interreligious dialogue; the other furnishes us with a goal for this interreligious dialogue.

In fact this is how we understand them, these two concepts are not additions to the Tracian paradigm but they develop it from the inside. In the epilogue of *The Analogical Imagination* Tracy describes the dialogue between religions as a conversation where the subject matter of the conversation takes over the dialogue.[799] This conversation supposes a situation of pluralism because the autonomy of each tradition is respected so it can probe into its own particularity in order to understand the insights coming from the exposure to the other religious traditions.[800] The two resources from public theology we have mentioned can be seen as concretions of these ideas. We can consider then the common good as the subject matter of the conversation between religions when they deal with social issues. The common good can be the subject matter of the conversation because it reflects an important human question in any period of history: how can we live together in a way that we all live better? As a subject matter it should take over and lead the conversation without allowing it to become some kind of power struggle. In turn, we can consider the category of public religion as the precondition that assures the respect of pluralism that Tracy requests. The category of public religion, understood as respect for human rights, assures that every religion will respect the others and will not try to impose on them its

[799] Cf. Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 447.

[800] Cf. Ibid., 449.

creed. This allows all religions to deepen into their own symbolic and narrative tradition in order to integrate the new insights coming from exposure to the others.[801]

### *i. The Preconditions: The Category of Public Religion*

Firstly, I would identify a previous condition in order to begin an interreligious dialogue on social issues: the religions involved should fit the type called "public religion."[802] The category of "public religion" becomes then a normative framework for any interreligious dialogue on social issues.[803] The term public religion has been used in different ways by various authors.[804] Here we will employ the term public religion as a religion which accepts human rights and modern democracy, although it might want to continue developing these concepts. The way I use the term follows its origin in the current

[801] It is possible to find other resources in the authors seen inside the current of public theology. One example could be Linnel Cady's proposal of a public theology based on monotheism rather than on a particular religious tradition, cf. Cady, *Religion, Theology, and American Public Life*, 97ff. However, I do not consider Cady's proposal valuable because it sacrifices the particularity of each tradition, one of the main goals of public theology. Moreover, if we want to take into account non-theistic religions like Buddhism or apparently polytheistic ones, like Hinduism, monotheism is not a good starting point. In any case, Cady's proposal does not cohere with Tracy's paradigm which we are adopting.

[802] The category of public religion could be assimilated to others used by the Muslim authors we have seen as, for example, Majid's idea of Islam as an "open religion." "As an 'open religion,' Islam has developed a cultural system which is highly receptive to other cultures. Islam must be able to positively and consistently accept and validate modern values akin to its own fundamental principles, like the ideas propounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Maybe there is a need for some very particular adjustments in Islamic principles, but this should be seen as an essential adjustment of a certain time and place." Majid, *The True Face of Islam*, 272; similarly, Sachedina speaks of an "inclusive view of religion," cf. Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights*, 196.

[803] I am inspired by Intan's work in which he affirms: "[T]his study will provide a normative argument regarding how religion can make a positive and significant contribution in Indonesian public life through the realm of civil society." Intan, *"Public Religion" and the Pancasila-Based State of Indonesia*, 3.

[804] "Public religion shares certain attributes with public theology, one of which is confusion about the meaning of the terms." Breitenberg, "To tell the truth: Will the real public theology please stand up?" 58.

of public theology and its subsequent use by José Casanova. The term was introduced and highlighted by Martin Marty when studying the writings of Benjamin Franklin. Franklin, in a proposal to reform the education of youth in Pennsylvania, identifies religion as an important element of this education because of its usefulness to the public; he then speaks about "public religion."[805] In his 1981 book *The Public Church,* Marty transformed the term into a societal category, which he sees as the opposite of civil religion. Public religion describes a religion which, keeping its particular characteristics and identity, is not a cause of conflict in society but contributes to public virtue and the common weal.[806] Marty is still thinking in Christian terms and, therefore, his book is focused on Christianity. He deals preferentially with public church and not with public religion.

However, José Casanova received Marty's inspiration and developed further the category of public religion in his book *Public Religions in the Modern World.* Public religions are those religions which attain a significant presence in the public sphere. This phenomenon is particularly emphasized today, and, thus, Casanova speaks of a current "deprivatization of religion".[807] Casanova proposes normative criteria in order to judge if a particular contemporary public religion is beneficial to society or not. It has to incorporate three major elements of the Enlightenment critique of religion: the cognitive critique of religious worldviews, the critique of religions as ideologies of legitimation and the critique

[805] Cf. Franklin, "Proposal Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania," 336–337.

[806] Cf. Marty, *The Public Church: Mainline-Evangelical-Catholic*, 16.

[807] Cf. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, 41.

of religions as possible causes of alienation.[808] The project of incoporating these critiques is aimed at insuring that religion respects human life and freedom. Finally, the public presence of the religion should not unfold at the level of state (established religion) or politics (partisan attitudes). For Casanova, the public presence of religion should be felt at the level of civil society.[809]

This normative category of public religion thus becomes a pre-condition for Christian-Muslim dialogue on societal issues. Regarding this, Christian Troll observes that "the Islamic world as a whole has not yet genuinely reconciled itself to the concept of freedom of religion and opinion and indeed the total underlying complex of human rights."[810] Moreover, because our ultimate goal is to address the Spanish situation we are thinking of Islamic communities in the midst of modern European pluralistic democracies. Regarding this Troll asserts that "it is important for Muslims to understand and fully recognize that they are now living in Europe and therefore in a distinct social, cultural, and religious environment." In this new environment "the legal and political systems of modern

[808] Cf. Ibid., 233.

[809] "It has been maintained throughout this study that ultimately only public religions at the level of civil society are consistent with modern universalistic principles and with modern differentiated structures." Ibid., 219; Casanova's claim to limit religions to the space of civil society does not mean a prohibition for religions to have a presence in the political debate, a common Muslim concern. It is possible to participate in this debate from the space of civil society. "Although the domains of government and policy formation are not generally the appropriate ones in which to argue controverted theological and philosophical issues, it is neither possible nor desirable to construct an air-tight barrier between politics and culture... religious contributions to policy debates need not always wait until a larger cultural consensus is achieved. Rather, public discourse between religious communities and the larger society will move back and forth between larger cultural questions of value and meaning on the one hand and more specific policy questions on the other." Hollenbach, *The Global Face of Public Faith*, 170.

[810] Troll, *Dialogue and Difference*, 4; Troll reminds us also of the long and difficult history of Christianity's acceptance of human rights and religious freedom. Cf. Ibid., 49ff.

Western Europe have developed with post-Enlightenment secular features·"[811] Therefore, in the dialogue of Christianity with Islam on social issues we are supposing that both religions fit the category of public religion and, therefore, accept democracy, religious pluralism and human rights. There is no problem in opening a dialogue on the meaning and development of these concepts,[812] so we can then welcome Ramadan and Allawi's claims on these matters.[813] However, we cannot entertain the possibility of renouncing these important legal and political achievements of human history. The value of these concepts of democracy, pluralism and human rights is proven by the fact that they are praised in one way or another by all five of the Muslim authors we have considered.

Seen from a Tracian point of view, we can interpret these requirements of the category of public religion as a need for every religion to establish two ongoing critical correlations or conversations in a pluralistic society: one conversation with the main concepts of the political and legal framework and another conversation with the other religions. The category of public religion can also very succesfully embody one of the conditions of possibility for interreligious dialogue that Cornille identifies in *The Im-possibility of Interreligious Dialogue.* She speaks there of the interconnection of religions as "the conviction that, in spite of important and ineradicable differences in belief and

[811] Troll, *Dialogue and Difference*, 12.

[812] "Muslims and non-Muslims will need to reflect and debate openly together about the details of the legal and political frameworks within which all the communities of Europe and its various nation-states coexist and in which all they must seek to live together in peace." Ibid., 12.

[813] An example of their claims is the position of the European Muslim scholar Tariq Ramadan: "The West has given us a particular form of modernity, it partakes of its history and points of reference. Another civilization can, from within, fix and determine the stakes in a different fashion. This is the case of Islam at the end of this twentieth century." Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*, 7–8.

practices, religions may find one another in a common ground."[814] In its simplest form, she identifies this interconnection or common ground with common challenges or concerns.[815] The respect for human rights and pluralism that public religion supposes may be this interconnection between religions.

### *ii. The Goal: A Pluralistic Understanding of the Common Good*

Second, instead of setting limits to the dialogue between religions, we will rather set a goal to the dialogue. Setting a goal allows us to respect the natural dynamic of interreligious dialogue, which allows each religion to confront and challenge the other, but at the same time to channel our efforts in a concrete direction. This approach to interreligious dialogue corresponds to Tracy's late view of the two main dimensions of religion we have mentioned above: mystical and prophetical. For Tracy, the mystical dimension is the search for new and deeper understandings of God and the prophetic is the proclamation of who God is and what are his demands upon us. Tracy seeks "new ways to unite those mystical and prophetic trajectories."[816] But he also asserts the need to "recover the central prophetic core of Christianity in the context of the interreligious dialogue," what he identifies with the "struggle for justice."[817] This emphasis in the prophetic is shared by

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[814] Cornille, *The Im-possibility of Interreligious Dialogue*, 95.

[815] Cf. Ibid., 97ff.

[816] Tracy, *Dialogue with the Other*, 100.

[817] Ibid., 104.

the other major monotheisms: Judaism and Islam.[818] Therefore, it makes sense to channel our conversation with Muslims in the modern pluralistic democracies in the direction of a better definition of the demands of God on our human societies in order to be more just. This will enable us to leave the conversation open to any development which will show the actual ways in which prophetism and mysticism are articulated in our religions.

Drawing from public theology's resources I propose to formulate this search for a more just society with the concept (coined by David Hollenbach) of a pluralistic common good. This new understanding is mostly the fruit of David Hollenbach's research and it is formulated in his book *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*. The common good is a concept born in Western classical philosophy. It has been part of the Christian tradition, particularly of Aquinas' thought, and it has played a major role in the Catholic Church's social teaching. In the synthesis of this social doctrine reflected in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* it is defined as "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily."[819] Hollenbach reinterprets the concept of common good to make it suitable for pluralistic societies. Because of the links between his and Tracy's thought, Hollenbach's reinterpretation can be understood as a concrete application of Tracy's critical-correlational model. Ultimately the pluralistic understanding of the common good supposes a critical

[818] Cf. Ibid., 100.

[819] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, "Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church", 2006, para. 164, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html.

correlation. A concept featured in the Catholic tradition (although its origins are rooted in Western classical philosophy) is correlated with a main trait of the present situation, pluralism.

Hollenbach proposes to understand the common good of a society as the ensemble of material and non-material goods which satisfy the needs of the members of a society. These goods include the sheer achievement of living together itself, that is to say, those values that are made possible only when we live together.[820] This common good is not achieved by isolated individuals coming together, but by individuals coming together in small or intermediate size communities where they can develop bonds of actual solidarity.[821] To name these communities Hollenbach speaks of "communities of solidarity" and sees them as existing at the level of civil society. These communities then come together in society through public speech, joint action and shared self-governance. The fact of participating in communities of solidarity allows the individuals to enjoy actual freedom in front of the larger society. Such a society is a community of freedom.[822] This view of the common good requires individuals to develop a particular virtue, what Hollenbach calls intellectual solidarity.[823] This virtue disposes us to see the other and the different as a

[820] Cf. Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 83.

[821] Cf. Ibid., 102.

[822] Cf. Ibid., 82.

[823] Curiously enough, Hollenbach put together this virtue of intellectual solidarity with a virtue he calls epistemological humility, cf. Hollenbach, David, "Virtues and Vices in Social Inquiry," in *The Global Face of Public Faith: Politics, Human Rights, and Christian Ethics* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2003), 39–53; Catherine Cornille also mentions epistemological humility in her set of conditions of possibility for interreligious dialogue, Cf. Cornille, *The Im-possibility of Interreligious Dialogue*, 4.

stimulus and a light in order to build our understanding of a good life.[824] Therefore, Hollenbach proposes a model for modern pluralistic societies from the point of view of the common good. Individuals are associated in small communities of solidarity, for example in religious groups, which assure their freedom. These communities of solidarity should interact at the social level with an attitude of intellectual solidarity and from their own views of life. This interaction is the means to build the society and to determine its common good.[825]

The common good, thus, includes the institutions that create and sustain bonds of solidarity among humans (such as churches, religious communities or associations) and also the actual possibility of sharing the different conceptions of human good. This sharing helps us grow toward a deeper understanding of the common good. A society which offers this possibility is what Hollenbach calls a community of freedom.

However, we should realize that the category of the common good exhibits some drawbacks. Although it is a concept coming from Western classical philosophy, it has been adopted and developed mostly inside Catholicism and Christianity in a larger sense. John Langan affirms that "the notion has roots in the classical world and in Augustine and Aquinas, but it achieved a special prominence in Catholic social teaching over the last

[824] Cf. Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 137–138.

[825] For a very good synthesis of Hollenbach's view on this issue cf. Hollenbach, "Afterword: a Community of Freedom."

century."[826] We can say, thus, that "the notion of the common good is an essential part of how modern Catholicism presents itself to the wider world and that this notion demands critical scrutiny from people who stand in other religious and intellectual traditions."[827] Therefore, it causes problems to present what many would consider a Catholic concept as a common category to orient interreligious dialogue with Islam.

Regarding this, it is clear that, in the spirit of Tracy's analogical imagination, it is up to our Muslim brothers to discover the actual analogies, similarities-in-difference, that the concept of common good awakes in their own belief. It is also up to them to accept being confronted in their tradition by this new concept. It will also be necessary for Christians to listen to the insights and even the criticisms that Muslim may offer regarding this concept of the common good. But, nevertheless the concept is still a very valid one in order to set the goal of interreligious dialogue on social issues.

First of all, this concept of the common good, understood as Hollenbach present it, has already been used in some interreligious dialogues with Islam.[828] In fact, it is already

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[826] John Langan, "The Common Good: Catholicism, Pluralism, and Secular Society," in *Building a Better Bridge: Muslims, Christians, and the Common Good* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2008), 81.

[827] Ibid.; regarding the Catholic character of the concept of common good John Rawls says: "Deriving from Aristotle and St. Thomas, the idea of the common good is essential to much of Catholic moral and political thought." Rawls, "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited," 452, note 29.

[828] As an example of the use of the term common good in the dialogue with Islam we can quote this testimony of Mato Zovkic, Catholic priest and professor of Sarajevo Theological Seminary: "In my involvement in interreligious dialogue in Bosnia-Herzegovina for the sake of the common good, I use several books written by American Catholic scholars... One of these writers, David Hollenbach, points out that civil society is constituted by a host of diverse social, economic, political, and cultural interactions." Mato Zovkic, "Faith and National Identity of Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina," in *Building a Better Bridge: Muslims, Christians, and the Common Good* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2008), 38.

being used by some Muslim scholars in their own reflection on social issues.[829] Moreover, there are quite similar elements in Islam which could be helpful in order to develop analogies with the common good. Abdulaziz Sachedina recognizes the idea of a common good for humans beyond religious belonging from the idea of a competition for good deeds between religions in Q 5:48.[830] Another example is the principle of *istislâh* by which the usual method of deducing legislation (*kiyâs)* can be trumped when the demands of human welfare or public interest (*maslaha)* are at stake.[831] Even authors whom we have considered more cultural, such as Tariq Ramadan, ultimately grow closer in their positions to this idea of a common good. Regarding this, Ramadan stresses the need of dialogue and collaboration between Muslims and non-Muslims in order to build a more just society and oppose oppressive structures in our world.[832] It is easy to perceive the many analogies, or

[829] "The *Qur'ân* gives importance to interpersonal relationships in order to establish an inclusive ethical order, an order that would create the institutions and culture that promote the creation of a spiritual-moral community made up of individuals willing and able to take up the challenge of working for the common good." Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights*, 72.

[830] Cf. Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism*, 70.

[831] Cf. H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, eds., "Istihsân and Istislâh," *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1995); Tariq Ramadan, in his essay in a book about the common good in the Christian-Muslim dialogue, makes reference to this Islamic concern for the collective. Regarding this, Ramadan mentions five principles (*al-maqâsid al-darûriyya*) that the *Qur'ân* and the *Sunna* demand to protect in society: *dîn* (religion), *nafs* (personal integrity), *'aql* (intellect), *nasl* (family relations), and *mâl* (property). Cf. Tariq Ramadan, "Islamic Views of the Collective," in *Building a Better Bridge: Mulsims, Christians, and the Common Good* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2008), 76.

[832] For example: "The present book aims to show that numerous preoccupations are shared between theologians, intellectuals, and more broadly, Western and Muslim peoples. Without minimizing the differences between the religious points of reference, the cultural foundations and the social, political, and economic dynamics, the women and men of good-will find convergent domains of action that, more than dialogue, must allow common stands and engagement." Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*, 294.

similarities-in-difference, between Ramadan's proposal and Hollenbach's pluralistic understanding of the common good.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Our goal in this dissertation is to develop a robust and suitable public theology, a public theology able to address the challenges of the Spanish context today. In doing so, I have opted for the critical-correlational method within public theology. It offers us what I consider the most sound and mature effort to develop a "theologically informed discourse." I believe in the need for and the benefits of a public theology as a proper answer to contemporary pluralism, but I already affirmed in the first chapter, that there are other ways of arguing. I mentioned particularly natural law as a way of arguing on social issues which is ultimately connected with public theology and which could also be very valuable.

It is important to say that, when facing the interreligious encounter with Muslims on social issues, there are several methods to frame the conversation. It can be framed in natural law language, or as a comparison of virtues or as a public theology. Each method has its advantages and disadvantages. The particularity of public theology is its capacity to address directly theological issues and to be open to an interreligious dialogue at a higher level than social issues. However, because of this, a public theology conversation with the Islamic tradition will probably be limited to small intellectual communities able to allow the other to challenge their own beliefs. Therefore, in the public debate on social issues we should be ready to bring in other frameworks when we feel that our dialogue partner cannot follow us in our conversation.

Having said this, as I have shown here, the critical-correlational method of public theology seems to be able to respond to the challenges of the dialogue with Muslims in social issues. On the one hand, it allows us to introduce quite explicitly the religious and theological arguments, welcoming the intent present among Muslims to confront modern secular values from the Islamic worldview. On the other hand, it integrates the inner dynamic of any interreligious encounter, which tends to push both dialogue partners to change and grow in their traditions in light of that of the other.

However, we have also seen how the critical-correlational model, as presented by David Tracy, tends to remain speculative. Therefore, it risks being driven in a direction that denies basic human liberties and it may remain inadequately concrete. In order to face these limitations I have proposed to complete it with two concepts from the public theology tradition: the normative category of public religion and the pluralistic understanding of the common good. On the one hand, a dialogue developed as a critical-correlation of two religious traditions should have a normative framework of respect for human rights. Both religious traditions should fulfill the requirements of a public religion. On the other hand, we want the dialogue to remain open to wherever the subject matter leads it, reflecting the real dynamic present in every interreligious dialogue. However, our dialogue has a main objective: to build a more just society. Therefore, in order to be productive, the dialogue should have an explicit goal: to foster the common good. Because of the pluralism at the base of modern societies, this common good can only be discerned and pursued through conversation and mutual knowledge of the different religious traditions.

These reflections help us define better the proposal that Martin Marty introduced in the 70's when he made reference for the first time to the idea of a public theology. It is a rich and inspiring idea that has being evolving and growing through the years. It is also an idea that has taken different shapes in different methods. Of this range of possibilities for a public theology, I have tried to select what I consider the soundest line of thought, the authors around the critical-correlational paradigm. I have then honed this line of thought in order to respond to the main characteristics I recognize in the Spanish context: secularism and the presence of Islam. In the following chapter we will make an effort to delve further into this characteristic of the Spanish context.

## IV. GUIDELINES FOR A PUBLIC THEOLOGY IN SPAIN

We will see in the next chapter how the Muslim presence in Spain has some particular characteristics. First, most Muslims are immigrants, therefore generally people of low income and resources. Second it is influenced mostly by the Sunni tradition. These factors limit the possibilities of a public theology because of the lack of Muslim intellectual communities willing to sustain a debate at this level. However, even if it proceeds in small communities and at a low level, a public theology discussion with Muslims would be extremely enriching for Spanish society.

The particular method for public theology I favor in this work, Tracy's critical correlation, is indeed a rather demanding method. The full image of this method we are outlining in this work shows how challenging this approach can be. We are not dealing with a neutral and aseptic discussion on how better to organize things in society. We are

describing a very engaging conversation where we are encouraged to offer an interpretation of our own religious tradition to the other. We should be ready to establish critical correlations between our interpretation and that of the other. And we should be ready to learn from the other and receive his own interpretation of his tradition. We have set some parameters for the conversation: the category of public religion as well as the goal of the common good. However, we want the conversation to be open so it can move, if necessary, from strictly social issues to more theological grounds. Such a conversation is demanding indeed. It requires a solid knowledge of one's own religious tradition, as well as a healthy dose of openness to approach other traditions and to learn from them.

It is only realistic to admit that such an approach to social issues will not always be possible to implement. We should be aware of the conditions facing our interlocutor in order not to demand of him an attitude or openness that is not possible for him at a particular moment. However, the proposal of such an approach to other religions in social issues remains extremely valuable. We have already mentioned other possible approaches to the dialogue in social issues (a natural law framework, virtues). The availability of the public theology arguments widens our range of possibilities when discussing social issues. It also allows a religiously-based view of society to enter into discussion, which is an important element when dialoguing with Muslims. While it might remain only a small contribution to the overall contact with the Islamic tradition, I believe it could ultimately be a field where great advances could be made in the design of society and in the search for a better societal understanding.

An interesting point to retain for the application of public theology in Spain is a reflection on the space for public theology. We have already seen how Valadier's thought suggests to us a very concrete space for the implementation of public theology: wise committees organized by the government or perhaps by private institutions. After opening the reflection to interreligious dialogue and the dialogue with Islam, as we have seen here, we can identify other spaces where this public theology conversation may take place. Regarding this, on the one hand, the document Dialogue and Mission identifies the forum of international organizations as one space where religions come together to discuss goals and criteria of human wellbeing.[833] On the other hand, Tariq Ramadan identifies a very important place for dialogue of action between religions in what he calls the level "meso" of social organizations.[834] He wants to promote interreligious collaboration at the level of popular mobilization and grassroots organization in order to resist the interests of superpowers and multinationals.[835]

The Spanish reality is not so thoroughly linked with the work of international organizations as Dialogue and Mission mentions. However, there is a strong social organization and a robust presence of NGOs. There is a reasonable presence of Muslims in these spaces. We should not ignore the role for public theology in formal forums such as governmental committees or ethical committees, the spaces that Valadier assigns to the

[833] Cf. Dialogue and Mission, 31 in Gioia, *Interreligious Dialogue: The Official Teachings of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)*, 576.

[834] Cf. Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*, 184.

[835] Cf. Ibid., 183.

discussion on social issues in pluralistic societies. But we can add this new space for this dialogue. I think the space of dialogue in NGO and civil society organizations will be very fruitful and usually in terms of the implementation of public theology.

# CHAPTER 4. THE FOREIGN LAND: THE SPANISH CASE

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since the goal of this dissertation is to bring theology into public in the Spanish context, this final chapter approaches the Spanish socio-historical reality in order to understand better the circumstances in which we seek to develop a public theology. The Spanish case represents an original case of the disenchantment process we approached when we investigated the work of Paul Valadier. Inserted in the European cultural stream, the Spanish culture has always maintained some particularities of its own. Because of Spain's political and economic decline from the 17th to the 19th century, Spanish culture has been somewhat marginalized from the mainstream of modern European cultural tendencies. Because of this, Spain has experienced the effects of the secularization process, of disenchantment, as well as the growing pluralism caused by migrations, later than other European countries and colored by its own idiosyncrasies. These particularities of the Spanish context should be well taken into account when thinking of ways for the Church to intervene in public life.

The distinctive features of the Spanish case are especially interesting because Spain was cited as a paradigmatic case in the 20th century discussions within the Catholic Church about religious freedom and the role the Church plays in the life of a society. In the debates on the declaration *Dignitates Humanae* during the Second Vatican Council, two countries were presented as models of the two different understandings of church-state relationships. On the one hand, the U.S. was held as a democracy where the separation between church

and state had been present since the beginning of the nation. On the other hand was Spain, at the moment of the Council a country with a dictatorship regime where Catholicism was considered the official religion of the state. We will call this model confessionalism.[836] Both alternatives were presented as ideal types of two understandings of the presence of the Church in society. During the Council, those promoting religious freedom cited the U.S. example, those defending the pre-Vatican thesis-antithesis model the Spanish one. When we now look back at these discussions, the way Spanish society has evolved since then becomes the historical proof of how necessary was a document like *Dignitatis Humanae*.

As we will see in this chapter, a main trait of the Spanish situation is one of a cultural identity problem. A country that for centuries has considered Catholicism as the essential feature of its culture suddenly discovers itself to be much less Catholic than it thought and also hosting believers of other religious communities. Among these other believers a majority are Muslims, the very religion against which the Spanish identity was constructed during the Middle Ages.

As an example of this identification of Spanish identity and Catholicism, we can approach the work of a famous 19th century Spanish intellectual, Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo (1856-1912). In his major 1880 work *Historia de los Heterodoxos Españoles,* a history of the Spanish heresies, he wrote: "The Spanish genius is eminently Catholic, the

[836] For a very good presentation of the debates around the drafting of *Dignitatis Humanae* cf. Julio L. Martínez, *Libertad religiosa y dignidad humana: claves católicas de una gran conexión* (Madrid: San Pablo-Universidad Pontificia de Comillas, 2009), 65ff; Julio Martínez imagines a possible debate during the Second Vatican Council between the Spanish Cardinal Morcillo and the U.S. Cardinal Spellman. Morcillo would claim that, thanks to not having religious freedom, Spain had 30 million Catholics, Spellman would respond by saying that thanks to having religious freedom there were 40 million Catholics in the U.S. Cf. Ibid., 14.

heterodoxy among us is an accident and a passing gust."[837] Such a view of Spanish identity has been consciously or unconsciously present in the country's mindset until very recently. The fierce rejection of Catholicism in some periods of modern Spanish history is the reverse side of the same coin.

The Spanish theologian Olegario González de Cardedal relates this faulty tendency to equate Spanish identity and Catholicism with what he calls Spanish *numantinism*.[838] With this expression he refers to a trait of Spanish character forged in history that tends to present one's position as the only right position in an exclusive way. Regarding this, I believe Spanish society now has an important opportunity. Our post-modern period is a time in which, in David Tracy's words, "the assumption of cultural superiority of the Western modernity is finished." We are in need, then, of new models of Church and of reason.[839] Cultural close-mindedness is no longer a possibility. These times are, therefore, an opportunity for Spain to overcome this *numantinism.* Our times demand that the Spanish culture establish an attitude of cultural and religious dialogue in society based on "the

[837] "Sinteticemos en concisa fórmula el pensamiento capital de esta obra: 'El genio español es eminentemente católico; la heterodoxia es entre nosotros accidente y ráfaga pasajera'." Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles*, vol. 1, 4th ed. (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1986), 48.

[838] "Lo más grave de estas dos actitudes es que ambas prolongan un numantinismo hispánico, por el cual cada uno propone su idea como alternativa excluyente de cualquier otra." Olegario González de Cardedal, *España por pensar: Ciudadanía hispánica y confesión católica* (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad Salamanca, 1985), 313. Numantia was the last Iberian city to resist the Roman armies. It fell after a long siege in 133 B.C.E. Its Iberian inhabitants preferred committing suicide than being taken prisoners.

[839] Cf. Tracy, *Dialogue with the Other*, 1.

intellectual, moral, and, at the limit, religious ability to struggle to hear another and to respond."[840]

The challenge is then to develop an understanding of the presence of religion in society, one which balances the public role of religion in society with the proper autonomy of politics. Such a development is key because it may help deflect the prejudices against and rejections of the intervention of the Church in society that are hindering its public role on many social and economic issues.

A fair objection that can be brought against our project concerns the Spanish perspective itself. Given the fact that Spain is, since 1986, part of the European process of integration, now the European Union, why do we still face this issue at a national level? Is it not time to cast a European tint over this issue beyond our limited national perspective? Because the future, and even the past and present, of Spain today cannot be understood outside the European framework, I will explicitly insert my reading of the Spanish situation into the larger European history and tendencies. In fact, the use of Paul Valadier's thought in order to adapt the public theology current to Spain is already an effort in this direction.

Nevertheless, drawing also from Paul Valadier, I believe that Europe is not built by ignoring the constituent nations but by integrating them.[841] So particular problems, such as the one we are discussing, the actual Spanish cultural identity, will not be solved magically

[840] Cf. Ibid., 4.

[841] "Dans l'actuelle phase de transition, l'adhésion à une nation est indispensable, mais elle doit se faire dans la conscience de son dépassement." Valadier, *Inévitable morale*, 162.

by an external actor. It is a task of the Spaniards themselves to come to terms with these dimensions of their history and identity, and to read it as integrated into a larger cultural horizon. This cultural clarification effort is already an important step forward for the process of European integration. That is how I envision my effort in this chapter.

Perhaps the best resource for reading the Spanish situation is to recall the following assertion from the document the Spanish bishops sent to the Church in Spain at the end of the Second Vatican Council: "We should confess that we have dozed off, at times, relying on our Catholic unity, protected by laws and centuries-old traditions. The times are changing. It is necessary to give strength to our religious life in the renewing spirit of the Council."[842] In spite of the opposition of many Spanish bishops to the document *Dignitatis Humanae* on religious freedom,[843] it seems that the action of the Holy Spirit during the Council brought them to a suddenly sharpened understanding of the Spanish social and religious situation.

In this chapter I will first present a brief study of the Spanish case of religious pluralism from which we will draw some conclusions regarding the type of theology that can be brought into public in this society. Then, I will try to outline the main traits of such a theology, collecting the various insights on this topic that we have discovered in previous

[842] "Hemos de confesar que nos hemos adormecido, a veces, en la confianza de nuestra unidad católica, amparada por leyes y por tradiciones seculares. Los tiempos cambian. Es necesario vigorizar nuestra vida religiosa dentro del espíritu renovador del Concilio." Joaquín Ortega, "La Iglesia española desde 1939 hasta 1976," in *Historia de la Iglesia en España: V La España contemporánea*, vol. 5 (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1979), 688.

[843] Cf. Estrada, *El cristianismo en una sociedad laica*, 141.

chapters. Finally, I will present two cases drawn from contemporary Spanish society where a public theology argument may be very fruitful. The first case concerns a Catholic proposition for reviewing Spanish fiscal policy to face the present economic crisis. The second involves the role and limits of educational centers of religious initiative in the Spanish educational system. Both issues are presently disputed in Spain, and in both cases an approach to them in the form of a theology done in public may help to open new and fruitful paths toward a solution.

## II. RELIGIOUS PLURALISM IN SPAIN

When speaking about pluralism in Spain we could employ several different optics: moral pluralism, political pluralism, regional pluralism.[844] In our case we will look at the Spanish case through the lens of religious pluralism. There are two good reasons for this: first, the goal of our work, which is to develop a public theology for Spain, is focused on the problem of the place of religion in society; and second, we will see how the religious shifts in Spanish society are at the bottom of major social and political dysfunctions. Therefore, the lens of religious pluralism seems the most useful approach to Spanish history and society.

[844]Although we are speaking about cultural identity, I will not enter into the issue of nationalisms and local identities inside Spain. This issue is of enormous complexity and lies beyond from the goal of my dissertation. I will focus on the cultural identity of Spain as a whole and the role of religion in it. Nevertheless I believe that any deeper understanding and appropriation of one dimension of social pluralism will help develop more constructive approaches to the others. Understanding and accepting better religious pluralism is a first step toward a better understanding of regional pluralism.

## 1. RELIGIOUS PLURALISM IN SPANISH HISTORY

Although Spain has generally been portrayed as a monolithically Catholic country, in fact, there has been religious pluralism from its very origins. The Visigoths, the Germanic people who gave the Iberian Peninsula political unity apart from the Roman Empire in the 5th century, were Arian Christians. Because of this, the Visigoth kingdom was composed of an Arian *élite* governing a mostly Catholic population, and a Jewish minority.[845] The image of a Catholic country with a perfect symbiosis of church and state appears only in 589 C.E. with the conversion of King Recaredo to Catholicism and with him the whole Visigoth people.[846] This desire of a national unity built around Catholicism put juridical and social pressure over the important Jewish minority in Visigoth Iberia.[847]

This Visigoth ideal of a unified Christian nation was truncated when the armies of the Ummayyad Caliphate invaded the Iberian Peninsula in 711 C.E. Practically the whole of the Iberian peninsula, *Al-Andalus* in Arabic, became part of *Dar al-Islam,* the lands ruled by Islam. There were Muslim rulers over one part or another of the Iberian peninsula from then until 1492. The Muslim rule created a rich and pluralistic society ruled by the *dhimma* social system.[848] In this society, the "people of the book" – Christians and Jews living in

[845] Cf. J. Fernández Alonso, "Iglesia y estado: 2. Épocas romana y visigótica," *Diccionario de historia eclesiástica de España* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1972), 1122–1126.

[846] Cf. Ibid., 1124.

[847] Cf. Teodoro González, "La Iglesia desde la conversión de Recaredo hasta la invasión árabe," in *Historia de la Iglesia en España: I La Iglesia en la España romana y visigoda (siglos I-VIII)*, ed. Ricardo García Villoslada, vol. 1 (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1979), 669ff.

[848] Rivera points out the contrast in tems of pluralism and tolerance between the late Visigoth society and the society of the golden moments of Muslim Spain during the Caliphate of Cordoba, cf. Javier Fernández Conde

Muslim lands—had social recognition and a certain tolerance, even though accorded a lower social status and forced to pay a special tax.[849] The *dhimma* system would not always mean tolerance; in fact it would be applied differently in different periods in function of the political needs of the Muslim states on the peninsula.[850] In particular, during the 11th and 12th centuries, and as a reaction to Christian conquests, Al-Andalus was invaded by Muslim fundamentalist movements from North Africa: the Almoravids and Almohads in 1085 and 1140 C.E. respectively. The intransigent understanding of Islam of these two movements implied an exclusive interpretation of the *dhimma* which precluded the presence of Christians – called *mozárabes*—and most Jews in *Al-Andalus*.[851]

Meanwhile, the Christian kingdoms in the north of the Iberian peninsula – León, Castile, Navarra, Aragón and, later on, Portugal— started to expand their territories south from the first enclaves in the northern mountains. As they occupied former Muslim territories, they began to develop a rather pluralistic and tolerant society. This society was composed of Christians coming from the north, mozarabic Christians and Jews emigrated from Al-Andalus and Muslims who had stayed in the conquered territories, the

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and Juan Francisco Rivera Recio, "Invasión y conquista musulmana de España," in *Historia de la Iglesia en España: II-1º La Iglesia en la España de los siglos VIII-XIV*, vol. 2–1º (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1982), 12–14.

[849] Cf. J.F. Rivera, "Iglesia y estado: 2. En la España mozárabe," *Diccionario de historia eclesiástica de España* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1972), 1126.

[850] We know of moments of real persecution and social pressure on mozarabic Christians like the time of the martyrs S. Eulogio and S. Álvaro in the 9th century Córdoba. Cf. Ibid., 1127.

[851] Ibid. The famous Jewish philosopher Maimonides would go into exile after the Almohad's conquest of Cordoba from the Almoravids in 1148; Cf. also Ramón Gonzálvez, "Las minorías étnico-religiosas en la edad media española," in *Historia de la Iglesia en España: II-2º La Iglesia en la España de los siglos VIII-XIV*, vol. 2–2º (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1982), 498–557.

*mudéjares*.[852] The best moments of this pluralistic tolerance took place in the city of Toledo after its conquest by Castile in 1085 C.E.[853] The legal status of the religious minorities was established by laws like the *Siete Partidas* in Castile or the *Usatges* in the Barcelona County. We see in these laws a development of the Roman-Visigoth legislation in the direction of the Muslim *dhimma.* Nevertheless, we cannot speak of religious freedom because there were restrictions on the public expression of non-Christian faiths and conversion from Christianity was not allowed. Moreover, Jews and Muslim paid a special tax to the king. However, Jewish and Muslim neighborhoods, called *aljamas,* had their own authorities and they enjoyed direct subjection to the king which allowed them to escape the feudal system.[854]

The end of this time of pluralism arrives with the Catholic monarchs, Isabel of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragón (1479-1516). The union of the Kingdoms of Castile and Aragón allowed thoughts of a unified Spain, thus recovering the dream of the Visigoth kingdom. This ideal led the newly unified Hispanic monarchy to start the campaign (1481-

[852] Ramón Gonzálvez praises this historical period asserting that "[c]on las salvedades apuntadas, y teniendo en cuenta que en el fondo de la convivencia latía un encuentro conflictivo de dos culturas, creemos que la sociedad medieval española configuró una arquitectura jurídico-social por muchos conceptos admirable, en la que a la minoría mudéjar le fue posible vivir en relativa armonía con la masa cristiana dominante." Gonzálvez, "Las minorías étnico-religiosas en la edad media española," 557.

[853] A marvelous example of this time of tolerance between the three religions in Spain is the epitaph written in the tomb of St. Ferdinand III King of Castile in the Cathedral of Seville. This epitaph is written in 4 languages: Spanish, Latin, Arabic and Hebrew. The Arabic and Hebrew texts praise King Ferdinand as "friend of God." Cf. Carlos Corral, "De Fernando III (+30-5-1252), ¿conoces los 4 epitafios del sepulcro en árabe, hebreo, castellano y latín? [BLOG.53]," *Periodista digital. El blog de Carlos Corral*, May 29, 2007, http://blogs.periodistadigital.com/carloscorral.php/2007/05/29/de_fernando_iii_30_5_1252_iconoces_los_4_52.

[854] Gonzálvez, "Las minorías étnico-religiosas En la edad media española," 515ff; This pluralist society started to experience strong tensions during the political and economic crisis of the 14th century that ended in the massive pogrom of Jewish and Muslim *aljamas* of 1391. Cf. Ibid., 528–531; Ibid., 554–557.

1492) to conquer the last Muslim territory in the Iberian Peninsula, the kingdom of Granada. National unity was to be accompanied by religious unity. But this religious unity was threatened by the presence of significant religious minorities and the difficulties of moving them to conversion and assimilating them culturally. This led first to the forced conversion or expulsion of Jews in 1492 and later to the forced conversion of the Muslim *mudéjares* in 1502.[855]

The arrival of the Habsburg dynasty with Emperor Charles I (1516-1558), and its strong opposition to the Reformation, linked Spanish identity with Catholicism even further. Spain became the main military and economic engine of the Holy Roman Empire during its struggle against the Reformation. This led to a view of Spain as a "mission state:" Spain felt a particular duty to defend and protect the Catholic Church in these times of turmoil.[856] This sense of religious duty developed an attitude of growing *regalismo* toward the Catholic Church, that is to say, a controlling attitude of the Spanish kings over the Church in Spain in competition with the pope.

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[855] Cf. José Luis González Novalín, "La inquisición española," in *Historia de la Iglesia en España: III-2º La Iglesia en la España de los siglos XV y XVI*, vol. 3–2º (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1980), 107–268; Cf. T. de Azcona, "Iglesia y estado: 10. Reyes Católicos (1474-1516)," *Diccionario de historia eclesiástica de España* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1972), 1137–1140; A very interesting figure is Fray Hernando de Talavera, first bishop of conquered Granada, who, in the Thomistic tradition, defended respect for the religious freedom of the Muslims and proposed persuasion as the only way to conversion. Cf. Rafael Benítez Sánchez-Blanco and Eugenio Ciscar Pallarés, "Conversión y expulsión de los moriscos," in *Historia de la Iglesia en España: IV La Iglesia en la España de los siglos XVII y XVIII*, vol. 4 (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1979), 255–263.

[856] J.L. Comellas, "Iglesia y estado: 12. Siglo XVI: Carlos I y Felipe II," *Diccionario de historia eclesiástica de España* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1972), 1142–1149.

Although with the Catholic monarchs, Isabel and Ferdinand, religious pluralism had disappeared in Spain, the issue was actually transformed, not simply settled. Social pluralism took the form of the problem of the *conversos* and *moriscos;* Jews and Muslims who converted to Christianity suffered strong rejection and social pressure. On the one hand, the Spanish Inquisition embodied this rejection of the *conversos* through an official persecution of dishonest conversions. On the other hand, the *morisco* problem, which prompted several wars, was ended in 1609 with the expulsion from Spain of all the *moriscos.*[857] The Reform was never really established in Spain. At the first moments of the Reformation, the exertion of strong control over the borders quarantined Spain from any contact with the works of Martin Luther. Later on, two small buds of Lutheranism appeared in Valladolid and Seville, both were quickly extinguished with the intervention of the inquisition and the death of its main leaders in 1559.[858]

The Bourbon dynasty, which started with Phillip V (King of Spain from 1700 to 1746), did not really deal with pluralism because of the disappearance of other religions in Spain. These kings were influenced by French Gallicism and by the desire to build a strong and unified modern nation-state. Throughout the entire 18th century they just stressed the previous *regalismo* over the Catholic Church in Spain to the benefit of the state. The two main events in this sense were the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Spanish territories in

[857] Cf. Benítez Sánchez-Blanco and Ciscar Pallarés, "Conversión y expulsión de los moriscos," 253–307.

[858] Cf. Menéndez Pelayo, *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles*, 1:930ff; Cf. Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles*, vol. 2, 4th ed. (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1987), 53ff. The first translation of the whole Bible into Spanish was made by Casiodoro Reina, a member of these first Lutheran communities in Spain in 1569.

1767 and the royal decree of 1799, by which the apostolic authority in Spain was handed over by King Charles IV to the Spanish bishops with the excuse of the imprisonment of Pius VI by Napoleon.[859]

The 19th century in Spain is the story of the tragic struggle to integrate the modern values associated with the French Revolution in a harmonic way with Spanish history and culture. After the failed imposition of these values by the Napoleonic armies (1808-1812), the various Spanish liberal parties of the century, in opposition to the absolutist trends, tried again to introduce them every time they achieved power. European political liberalism, a fruit of the French Revolution, promoted religious freedom as a main value. Nevertheless, all the liberal constitutions of Spain during the first half of the 19th century (1812, 1837, 1845) affirm some kind of confessionalism – the union of the Catholic Church and the state. This confessionalism was always accompanied by harsh control and limitation of the Church's life. The reason for this incoherent position of the 19th-century Spanish liberals was the enormous social influence of the Catholic Church in Spain. Because the European process of disenchantment or secularization arrived much later in Spain, the Catholic Church remained a major social actor. Confessionalism, interpreted as a modern version of *regalismo,* was the way for the liberal state to control such a powerful social institution and use it to reinforce the new liberal state. The 1851 concordat with the Catholic Church reflects the Church's tacit acceptance of the situation in order to maintain Catholicism as

[859] J.M. Cuenca, "Iglesia y estado: 15. Siglos XVIII-XX (1789-1903)," *Diccionario de historia eclesiástica de España* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1972), 1160–1163; among others, the pretext for expelling the Jesuits was their obedience to the Pope and their international character. This was perceived as a threat for the nation-state.

the state religion. It was only in the 1869 Constitution and the First Republic that religious freedom was established for some years. This change reflected also the growing pluralism of moral, political and religious positions in Spain. This pluralism grew as Spain started to join the general European process of secularization, especially among the politically conscious working class. Nevertheless, the country remained mostly Catholic until the middle of the 20th century.

After the restoration of the monarchy, the Constitution of 1876 again considered Catholicism as the official religion of the state, although the constitution asserted tolerance for other denominations. Throughout this entire century, in coherence with the theological position of the time, the Catholic Church rejected any concession to religious freedom and demanded the union of the Catholic Church and the state in Spain.[860]

In the 20th century the positions already present in the previous century were projected in an aggressive way while Spain passed through the difficult times of the social tensions of the 1930s, the Civil War and later Franco's dictatorship. This growing tension was fostered by the reflection in Spain of the ideological clash between Marxism and Fascism in Europe. First, the 1931 Constitution of the Second Spanish Republic introduced full separation between Church and state. However, inspired by the most radical interpretations of French *laïcité*, it did so in an aggressive way which limited the basic

[860] For a insighful and deep study on the relationship between Church and State in 19th-century Spain cf. Manuel Revuelta González, *La Iglesia española en el siglo XIX: Desafíos y propuestas* (Madrid: Universidad Pontificia de Comillas, 2005), 35–70.

freedom of the Catholic Church.[861] After the Spanish Civil War, Franco's regime reversed this position by reintroducing Catholicism as the official religion of the state in Franco's 1945 fundamental law called *Fuero de los Españoles*.[862] Other religions were forbidden to hold public worship. Because of Franco's Catholic legitimation, the conclusions of Vatican II, particularly the Decree *Dignitatis Humanae*, obliged the regime to modify the *Fuero de los Españoles* and introduce religious freedom in 1967. Nevertheless, Catholicism remained the official religion of the state. These two juridical extremes – the Second Republic and Franco's regime — and the tragedy of the Civil War that links them, explain the position that the drafters of the democratic Constitution would seek in 1978.[863]

While this long and tragic struggle to integrate religious freedom was taking place in Spain, religious pluralism returned progressively to the country, although on a somewhat smaller scale. Since the 1830s certain foreign Reformed preachers had been introducing Protestantism into Spain (especially in the form of Presbyterianism and

[861] The Constitution of the 2nd Spanish Republic explicitly forbade religious orders from being involved in any educational initiatives. It also banned the Society of Jesus from Spain for having a vow of obedience to an authority different from the state. Cf. Carlos Corral, *Confesiones religiosas y estado español: Régimen jurídico* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2007), 78–82.

[862] "The profession and practice of the Catholic religion, which is the religion of the Spanish state, will enjoy official protection. No one will be bothered because of their religious beliefs or their private worship. Other ceremonies or exterior manifestations different from the Catholic religion will not be allowed." *Fuero de los españoles, 1945, art. 6.*

[863] Cf. Corral, *Confesiones religiosas y estado español*, 82–86; "Si se quiere comprender el porqué de la actual redacción definitiva del texto de la Constitución de 1978, no hay más vía que tener ante la vista los dos sistemas constitucionales inmediatamente precedentes, tan extremos como contrapuestos entre el de la II República y el del Régimen del General Franco. De ninguna manera a ninguno de los dos, por ser tan quebrantadores de la unidad y convivencia sociales de los españoles, se quiso volver en el período de la transición a la democracia." Ibid., 78.

Congregationalism).[864] Also, some Jewish communities were formed by Jewish immigrants living in Spain. In general the attitude of Spanish society was initially one of rejection and persecution of these other religions, followed by an implicit tolerance. Substantial numbers of Muslims appeared again in Spain only in the 1990s, 500 years after the end of Muslim rule in Iberia. The cause of this presence was the increasing number of immigrants from Islamic countries who started to arrive in those years in Spain, attracted by economic prosperity which generated sizeable Muslim communities in Spain.

In general the position of the state toward this new religious pluralism during the 19th century was one of implicit tolerance without openly recognizing religious freedom. However, some of the first Protestants in Spain at the beginning of the 19th century were arrested and brought to court. Also throughout the 19th century and during Franco's regime there were limits to the public expression of non-Catholic faiths. Although the affirmation of religious freedom by the 1869 Constitution didn't last long, it somehow influenced the subsequent 1876 Constitution. This Constitution had to recognize the expanding pluralism within plural Spanish social reality and officially declared religious tolerance. The theoretical inspiration of this Constitution was the Catholic thesis-antithesis paradigm.[865] A major moment in the history of Spain's religious pluralism is the agreement reached in 1992 by the Spanish government with several religious minorities which accorded full recognition and a concrete legal status to these minorities. This agreement is a development

[864] Cf. B. Corvillón and D. Vidal, "Reforma protestante: 2. Periodo moderno. Años 1835-1967," *Diccionario de historia eclesiástica de España* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1973), 2063–2065; Cf. Menéndez Pelayo, *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles*, 2:887ff.

[865] Cf. Corral, *Confesiones religiosas y estado español*, 71–78.

of the 1978 Constitution and the subsequent 1980 Law on Religious Freedom. The agreement rules the relationship between the Spanish state and different religious minorities identifying several non-Catholic Christian denominations, Islam and Judaism as notably rooted (*de notable arraigo)* in Spain.[866]

### 2. THE PRESENT JURIDICAL FRAMEWORK FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

In our historical survey of Spanish religious pluralism it is easy to identify the 1978 Constitution as a major milestone and an important historical accomplishment. The Constitution is the fruit of a remarkable consensus of all political parties in the initial moments of the new democracy established by King Juan Carlos I after Franco's death. It establishes a juridical framework which integrates the reality of the process of secularization which was well advanced in the Spanish society by then, as well as the then still incipient religious pluralism.[867] It is also easy to identify within it the inspiration of the new position of the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council. In fact the Catholic

[866] Cf. Ministerio de Justicia. Gobierno de España, "Acuerdo de cooperación del estado español con la Federación de Entidades Religiosas Evangélicas de España (aprobado por la Ley 24/1992, de 10 de Noviembre)", accessed February 3, 2012, http://www.mjusticia.gob.es/cs/Satellite/es/1215197982464/Estructura_C/1215198063796/Detalle.html; cf. also Ministerio de Justicia. Gobierno de España, "Acuerdo de cooperación del estado español con la Comisión Islámica De España (aprobado por la Ley 26/1992, de 10 de Noviembre)", accessed March 31, 2012, http://www.mjusticia.gob.es/cs/Satellite/es/1215197982464/Estructura_C/1215198063872/Detalle.html.

[867] José Casanova confirms this historical reading of the 1978 Constitution in his case study on Spain: "The constitutional pact made possible the drafting of a constitution which, for the first time in Spanish history, was not the imposition of the will of the victors in the political struggle over the vanquished but, rather, the end result of an exacting process of responsible backstage negotiation between representative political elites." Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, 88.

Church institutionally and through individual Catholics was a major actor fostering the establishment of the democracy.[868]

In order to approach the 1978 Constitution we should first of all keep in mind that the contemporary Spanish juridical framework in religious freedom is not an isolated position. The Constitution is harmonized with the major international human rights instrumets to which Spain belongs: the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent agreements; the agreements of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE); and those of the Council of Europe.[869]

Moreover, contemporary Spain can be understood only as integrated in a larger political community, the European Union, sharing the project of a fully integrated Europe. Therefore, we should also see the Spanish juridical framework of religious freedom as integrated and dependent on the European Union's, even though this was developed later. The Treaty of the European Union, after the amendments of the 2009 Treaty of Lisbon, apart from asserting religious freedom among the fundamental rights, in its article 17 affirms:

> 1. The Union respects and does not prejudice the status under national law of churches and religious associations or communities in the Member States.

[868] José Casanova sees the role of the Catholic Church in the transition process to democracy in Spain as an example of his category of "public church." "If the dissociation of the church from the Franco regime contributed to the regime's crisis of legitimation, the church's support of the democratic opposition contributed to the strengthening of civil society." Ibid., 85–86; the Spanish Jesuit Josep María Margenat presents this role of the Catholic Church as an example of the best European social catholicism, cf. Josep Maria Margenat, "Espagne, l'après Franco," *Projet*, no. Special Issue: *Le catholicism social européen* (September 2004): 21–26.

[869] Cf. Corral, *Confesiones religiosas y estado español*, 7–14.

> 2. The Union equally respects the status under national law of philosophical and non-confessional organizations.
> 3. Recognizing their identity and their specific contribution, the Union shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with these churches and organizations.

This article supposes that the European Union respects the particular laws of each state regarding the different religions.[870] However, the Treaty clearly affirms the need of mutual recognition and collaboration (open, transparent and regular dialogue) between the European Union and the different religions. Carlos Corral sees many similarities between the European Union's understanding of the church-estate relationship and the system reflected in the Spanish Constitution: an a-confessional state that collaborates with the different religions.[871]

The main juridical norm on religious pluralism and religious freedom in Spain is article 16 of the 1978 Spanish Constitution:

> "1. Ideological, religious and worship freedom will be guaranteed for individuals and communities, with no other limitation in their manifestations that the necessary ones in order to preserve public order, as protected by the law.
>
> 2. No one could be obliged to declare his ideology, religion or beliefs.
>
> 3. No confession will have state character. The public powers will take into account the religious beliefs of Spanish society and will maintain the consequent relationships of cooperation with the Catholic Church and the other confessions."[872]

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[870] In fact, in the European Union we can find today countries with an official state religion (like U.K. or Denmark) and without one (France, Germany, Spain), ibid., 23ff.

[871] Cf. Ibid., 15–18; Carlos Corral speaks of "a-confessional" using the term of the Spanish constitution and avoiding the more controverted terms "*laico*" or "*laicidad*." However, he will admit later on that a-confessionalism would mean the same as an open "*laicidad*." Ibid., 91–92.

[872] "1. Se garantiza la libertad ideológica, religiosa y de culto de los individuos y las comunidades, sin más limitación en sus manifestaciones que la necesaria para el mantenimiento del orden público, protegido por la

As we have already seen, we can only fully understand the position of the Spanish Constitution if we see it as an effort to avoid the two previous extremes of the 1931 Constitution and Franco's 1945 *Fuero de los Españoles.* Carlos Corral identifies different inspirations in this position, particularly the German understanding of the separation of church and state. He reads in this article three main principles that will rule religious freedom and pluralism in Spain:[873]

- Religious freedom: ("ideological, religious and worship freedom will be guaranteed"). Religious freedom is affirmed as an extension of ideological freedom. It is said of individuals but also of communities and it is limited by the idea of public order.
- A-confessionalism: ("no confession will have state character"). The Constitution acknowledges the distinction between the state and the churches, their different authorities, organization and their autonomy. No religion or church is considered to be the state's.
- Cooperation with the Churches ("The public powers… will maintain the consequent relationships of cooperation…*"*). The distinction and separation does not mean for the Constitution ignorance of the religions. State and religions are independent but

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ley. 2. Nadie podrá ser obligado a declarar sobre su ideología, religión o creencia. 3. Ninguna confesión tendrá carácter estatal. Los poderes públicos tendrán en cuenta las creencias religiosas de la sociedad española y mantendrán las consiguientes relaciones de cooperación con la Iglesia católica y las demás confesiones." "La Constitución Española De 1978",February 7, 2012, http://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/Espana/LeyFundamental/index.htm.

[873] Cf. Corral, *Confesiones religiosas y estado español*, 94–101; Cf. Corral, *La relación entre la Iglesia y la comunidad política*, 275–286.

they should cooperate for a common goal. Article 10 of the Constitution sets that common goal when establishing the dignity of the human person as the goal of the State.[874]

To these three principles, Corral adds a fourth quasi-constitutional principle: the development of the relationship between the State and the Catholic Church and the other confessions through agreements with these institutions. The text of the Constitution does not say anything about these agreements and this has made them quite controversial at times. Nevertheless, it is clear that cooperation with the religions which the Constitution demands had to be made concrete somehow. Moreover, the 1980 Law on Religious Freedom, which develops the Constitution, makes explicit reference to the need for agreements with the confessions.[875]

These principles of the juridical framework of religious freedom are developed first of all in the Constitution itself when it establishes other related freedoms and rights: freedom of teaching (art. 27), freedom of expression (art. 20), stability of family (art. 39), of marriage (art. 32), right of reunion (art. 21), of association (art. 22), right of property (art. 33) and juridical equality (art. 14).[876]

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[874] "La dignidad de la persona, los derechos inviolables que le son inherentes, el libre desarrollo de la personalidad, el respeto a la ley y a los derechos de los demás son fundamento del orden político y de la paz social." Article 10, Spanish Constitution.

[875] Cf. Corral, *Confesiones religiosas y estado español*, 100–101.

[876] Cf. Ibid., 94–95.

As already noted, these principles were later made concrete through two different instruments: on the one hand, the 1976 and 1979 agreements between the State and the Catholic Church. These agreements are the realization of the constitutional call for a particular collaboration with the Catholic Church and they do so in a bilateral way. The agreements refer to the mutual recognition of the Church's autonomy, to different juridical, cultural, economic issues, as well as the pastoral ministry to public institutions.[877]

On the other hand, the 1980 Law of Religious Freedom establishes the framework for collaboration with other religions and churches.[878] This collaboration will become concrete in the creation of the Register of Religious Entities as well as in different agreements with religions. Juridically the religions that are considered as "notably rooted" (*de notable arraigo)* in Spain are several non-Catholic Christian denominations, Judaism, and Islam.[879]

### 3. THE SOCIOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Any adequate approach to the present situation in Spain in terms of religious pluralism should take into account the sociological reality that lies behind the formal juridical

[877] Cf. Corral, *La relación entre la Iglesia y la comunidad política*, 145–157; the agreements between the state and the Catholic Church are frequently criticized from laicist positions as conceding unjustifiable privileges to the Catholic Church as well as not being really inspired by the 1978 Constitution. However, the drafters of the Constitutions and those of the agreements were reciprocally informed of their advances in the drafting process during 1978 and 1980. Cf. Ibid., 100; the best study on these agreements is Carlos Corral and Luis de Echevarría, eds., *Los acuerdos entre la Iglesia y España* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1980).

[878] Cf. Corral, *Confesiones religiosas y estado español*, 105–108; in 2009 the socialist government announced its project of reforming the 1980 law on religious freedom to adapt it to the more religiously pluralistic 21st century Spanish society. This project started a major controversy that stopped the process. cf. Editorial Board, "La libertad religiosa en España. ¿Hacia un nuevo modelo normativo?".

[879] Cf. for example Ministerio de Justicia. Gobierno de España, "Acuerdo de cooperación del estado español con la Federación De Entidades Religiosas Evangélicas de España (aprobado por la Ley 24/1992, de 10 de Noviembre)."

framework. The religious reality of contemporary Spain has moved beyond the situation during the first moments of the transition to democracy reflected in the 1978 Constitution. The main values are the same but the social situation has become much more complex due to the accumulated experience of the democratic system, the quick and widespread secularization of the population, as well as the arrival of many immigrants of different religions. In order to gain a glimpse of Spain's complex social situation we will use the 2008 research survey of Spain's public Center for Sociological Reseach (*Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas*) dedicated to religion.[880] The information that the survey provides is limited because it is based on a small number of questionnaires. However, it is very valuable information because there are not many other studies that reflect the religious allegiance of the Spanish population.

The first data we should note in this survey is the actual religious pluralism that exists in Spain. The study in questions 55, 55a, and 55aa gives us some figures about religious pluralism. 73.1% of the interviewees declared themselves Catholics, 4.4% believers of another religion, and 20.5% non-believers or atheists. The information about the believers of other religions allows us to affirm that 1.3% of the total of interviewees declared themselves Muslims, 0.8% declared themselves Protestants (mostly Evangelicals), 0.67% declared themselves Christians of the Eastern Orthodox tradition, and 0.1% were Buddhist.

However, these figures still do not reflect accurately the Spanish religious situation because the actual religious practice and engagement does not coincide with the public

[880] Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, "Estudio 2776: Religión II (10/20/2008)", 2008, http://www.cis.es/cis/opencm/EN/1_encuestas/estudios/ver.jsp?estudio=10382.

assertion of religious allegiance. Regarding this, question 55b tells us how 37.7% of the interviewees attend religious services less frequently than once a month, and 25.3% never attend religious services at all. Moreover, question 28 tells us how 73% of the interviewees never participate in activities of their religious community apart from religious services. Therefore, the actual practice of religion is rather low (34% of Catholics attend mass at least once a month) and the engagement with their religious communities is even lower (only 20.5% participate several times a year in activities of their religious communities other than masses).

In terms of respondents' opinions about religious pluralism, question 33 tells us that 48.3% of the interviewees affirm that there are basic truths in many religions, 19.8% that there is not much truth in any religion, and 19.3% that there is only one true religion. Question 13 shows how 89.3% of the interviewees agree with the statement "we should respect all religions." Because believing that one's religion is the true one does not mean that we reject the others, this data is hopeful in terms of the acceptance of other religions among the Spanish population.

Finally, the survey also conveys information about the attitude toward the public presence of religions. Question 8 shows how 44.3% of the interviewees affirm that the Catholic Church and the other religious institutions inspire little or no confidence at all. Question 10 shows that 81.6% of the interviewees affirm that religious authorities should not influence the vote of the people and 79% that they should not try to influence the decisions of the government. Question 12 shows that 51.3% of the interviewees affirm that

the Catholic Church and other religious organizations have too much power in society. 31.8% say that they have the right amount of power and 10.8% that they do not have enough power.

Diaz Salazar interprets this sociological data in terms of a series of concentric circles that define the cultural-religious identity of the Spaniards.[881] While approximately 73% of Spaniards have a Catholic cultural identity; only around 42% consider themselves religious persons; and only 34% actually display a Catholic ecclesial identity (they go to mass at least once a month). Besides this, 20.5% have a non-believer or atheist identity, 1.3% have a Muslim identity, 0.8% have a Protestant identity and 0.67% have a Christian Eastern Orthodox identity.

These tendencies will surely persist and even grow in the future. The sociological survey on youth by SM, a Spanish religious publisher, *Jóvenes Españoles 2010* gives us much interesting data.[882] Only 53% of the interviewed young people declared themselves Catholics. And 62% of the interviewed affirm that they never, or almost never, attend religious services. Curiously, if we take only the immigrant population there is a higher percentage of people who affirm that they believe in God (81%); and attendance at religious services is also higher (53.5% affirm they attend religious services at least once a month).

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[881] Cf. Díaz-Salazar, *España laica*, 153–154.

[882] Cf. Grupo SM, "Dossier de prensa Encuesta Jóvenes Españoles 2010", November 24, 2010, http://prensa.grupo-sm.com/2010/11/casi-la-mitad-de-los-j%C3%B3venes-espa%C3%B1oles-declara-su-falta-de-confianza-en-un-futuro-prometedor-para-el.html.

Therefore we can say that the Spanish population is still Catholic in large proportion. Although there is a presence of other religions and Christian confessions, this presence is still small. The major alternative to Catholicism overall is different forms of religious indifference or atheism. However, the low levels of church attendance and engagement with one's own religion allow us to consider the actual Catholic presence in Spanish society as smaller than it seems. In the future, the number of Catholics likely will continue to diminish in favor of religious indifference as we see with the data on Spanish youth. Among other religions the main one is Islam followed by various non-Catholic Christian denominations. The presence of Jews remains very small.

There seems to be a positive attitude toward other religions and religious pluralism seems to be well received by Spaniards after these years of democracy and growing diversity in society. This data ruptures the historical image of Spaniards as religiously intolerant people. However, we may still wonder if, when confronted with actual contact with persons of other religions, the same tolerant attitudes will remain.

Finally, we can clearly perceive a rejection of the public presence of churches and religions, particularly a rejection of their influence over political decisions. This rejection seems to accompany a certain distrust of religious institutions.

Regarding Islam, we have already seen that the survey of the *Centro de Estudios Sociológicos* identifies 1.3% of the Spanish population as Muslims. However, this data is not very accurate because it is obtained from a limited number of interviews. The demographic study on the Muslim population in Spain made by the Muslim association,

*Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España,*[883] estimates that the percentage of Muslims in Spain is 3%. Among the Muslims in Spain, the same source estimates that 27.5% are of Spanish origin and 72.5% are of foreign origins. This means that a majority of the Muslims in Spain are immigrants. The main countries of origin of the Muslim population are Morocco, Algeria, Senegal, Pakistan, Nigeria, Gambia, Mali and Guinea. Because of their national origin, most of the Muslims in Spain are Sunni. There is only one Shia Muslim community registered in the official register for religious entities.[884] There is also a small presence of the *Ahmadiyya* Muslim Community, another branch of Muslim tradition.[885]

### 4. THE SPANISH "STATE OF MIND" REGARDING RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Understanding the Spanish case regarding religious pluralism is a matter of comprehending more than statistical or historical data, but must also include an appreciation of the general state of mind regarding this issue. Rafael Díaz-Salazar's insightful book *España Laica* gives us a glimpse of this state of mind at the beginning of the 21st century. Because religious pluralism in Spain is so recent, until now the social perception of religion in general was inevitably linked with the perception of the Catholic Church. Therefore, this will provide the main lens in this section.

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[883] Cf. Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España, "Estudio demográfico de la población musulmana: Explotación estadística del censo de ciudadanos musulmanes en España referido a fecha 31/12/2010."

[884] Cf. Ministerio de Justicia, "Registro de confesiones minoritarias", accessed February 11, 2012, http://dgraj.mju.es/EntidadesReligiosas/NCindex.htm.

[885] Cf. "Comunidad Musulmana Ahmadía del Islam en España", 2011, http://www.islamahmadiyya.es/ In fact, this Muslim community in 1982 opened the first Mosque in Spain since 1492 in the village of Pedro Abad (Córdoba). .

First of all, Díaz-Salazar speaks of a general perspective upon the past or reactivation of communities of memory in contemporary Spain.[886] These communities of memory are focused on the events in Spanish history between 1931 and 1975, the Second Spanish Republic, the Civil War and Franco's regime. Therefore, on the one hand, some communities are explicitly claiming the heritage of the Spanish Second Republic. This heritage was later erased and repressed by Franco's regime, with the Catholic Church remaining silent about this. On the other hand, other communities are claiming the memory of the aggressive attitude, and subsequent violent attacks, against the Catholic Church during the Second Republic and the Civil War. This reactivation of the historical memory of this period makes it the lens through which the role of religion in Spanish society is judged.

Secondly, Díaz-Salazar points out how the generation which is right now most active in the Spanish political and cultural scene, those between 40 and 65, are existentially marked by the ideology of Franco's regime.[887] The memory they preserve of their early education is one of an oppressive environment: a time of repression in the political and ideological as well as in the intimate, personal sphere, in sexuality and life style.[888] This ideology was called "national-Catholicism" because it identified Spanish identity and Catholicism, integrating all this in a quasi-fascist social view.

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[886] Cf. Díaz-Salazar, *España laica*, 89–92.

[887] Cf. Ibid., 92.

[888] Cf. Ibid.

Moreover, the Spanish state of mind toward religion is also marked by the effects on it of a widespread psychological feature. There are some people in the Spanish political and cultural milieu who have negotiated important identity changes as society became more and more secularized; these changes have led them to take radical positions. It is possible to identity many important societal actors who have taken strong anti-Catholic position after having a close relationship with the Church in their youth.[889] These factors, together with an increasing religious ignorance among the young generations, create a common imaginary that is very negative and prejudiced against the Catholic Church and, as an extension, to any religion.

Díaz-Salazar also identifies a very positive influence of Catholicism in Spanish society as a result of the general trend of modernization of the Church in the second half of the 20century.[890] I refer here to the modernization trend fostered by the Second Vatican Council, which removed the Catholic legitimacy of Franco's regime and helped Spain enter peacefully into democracy.[891] However, Díaz-Salazar considers that this more positive presence of the Catholic Church has not been fully perceived by society. There are three main causes of this misperception: the suppression in the 60s of many grassroots Catholic lay movements, a superficial appropriation of Vatican II's insights, and a general

[889] Díaz-Salazar points out the important number of former priests and nuns present in the political and cultural world in Spain. Cf. Ibid., 97.

[890] Cf. Ibid., 96.

[891] For an instructive account of the role of the Catholic Church in the process of transition toward democracy cf. Margenat, "Espagne, l'après Franco"; a similar perception can be found in José Casanova's case study on Spain, cf. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, 75–91. Casanova considers that the attitude of the Catholic Church in Spain, helping as it did to introduce democracy, reflects his category of public religion.

movement toward a more integrist position in the Catholic Church as a result of the effects of secularization.

This general Spanish state of mind regarding religious pluralism today portrays a rather tense social environment. On the one side we have some influential groups in society which support a very negative perception of the role of religion in society and demand a more exclusive laicism in society. On the other side, the social groups linked to the Catholic Church defend a more positive role of religion, understood primarily as Catholicism. These groups argue their position in a polemical way as a reaction to the more laicist social environment.

This general state of mind is now changing as a result of the new social situation caused by immigration since the 90s. Because a good number of immigrants are Muslims (15.18% of all immigrants), or members of other Christian denominations (Greek Orthodox13.99%, Protestants 7.09%),[892] religious pluralism is indeed growing in Spain. This new social complexity obliges all Spanish societal actors to rethink their positions and views about religion.[893] These changes may introduce fresh air and help to overcome the polemical opposition between laicism and Catholic integrism that the previous state of mind seemed to foster.

[892] Cf. López Camps, *Asuntos religiosos*, 45–46.

[893] Cf. Ibid., 90–93.

## 5. CONCLUSIÓN

A key point to highlight in this brief case study of religious pluralism in Spain is that religious pluralism is still mostly reflected in the Catholicism-disbelief alternative. This is a natural consequence of Spain's history. Moreover, this alternative has been experienced since the 19th century with a growing tension that ended up in open violence during the Civil War. Franco's dictatorship was an artificial attempt to resolve this tension in favor of Catholicism. This attempt is now strongly rejected and this interlude is perceived as an oppressive period. The present juridical and political situation is a real and appropriate response to this historical conflict.[894]

The 1978 Constitution, in order to avoid evoking the 1931 Constitution and any exclusive understanding of laicity, does not use the term laicity. It merely states that "No confession will have State character." Analysts speak then of an a-confessional State.[895] However it would be perfectly possible to call it a regime of laicity when it is understood as a fair autonomy of the State and religion.[896] In spite of the appropriateness of the juridical framework, it is clear that it has yet to reach the most primary feelings of the Spanish people. These feelings are still deeply marked by a polemical approach to the place of religion in society.

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[894] Lluis Martínez Sistach, bishop of Barcelona, asserts that during the drafting of the 1978 Constitution there existed a will to overcome definitively the "religious question" in Spanish history. "[S]olucionar para siempre que la regulación del factor religioso fuese motivo de división entre los ciudadanos." Lluis Martínez Sistach, "La libertad religiosa. Relaciones Iglesia-estado," *Estudios Eclesiásticos* 86, no. 337 (June 2011): 418.

[895] Cf. Corral, *La relación entre la Iglesia y la comunidad política*, 277ff.

[896] Cf. Martínez Sistach, "La libertad religiosa. Relaciones Iglesia-estado," 433.

The growing presence of Muslims and non-Catholic Christians is changing this situation but it is still a rather small numeric presence. However, symbolically the presence of these other religions plays a very important role. They oblige us to look for new readings of Spanish identity and history, as well as to work to overcome the present polemical religious situation. This growing pluralism is assisting in the development of more positive approaches to the role of religion in society, a new inclusive or positive laicity.[897]

We can identify the problem at the bottom of the present situation as a mistaken assimilation of Spanish national identity and Catholicism. This assimilation has been fostered by centuries of ambiguous relationships between the various Spanish authorities and the Catholic Church in the tradition of the *regalismo.* The Spanish theologian Olegario González de Cardedal, in his important book *España por Pensar* speaks of a mistaken identification between Spanish citizenship and Catholic confession throughout Spanish history.[898] The famous Spanish theologian sets as a goal for Spanish theology to discern and separate Spanish citizenship and Catholicism, establishing a fruitful relationship between them. In this effort the extremes to avoid are a radical laicism as well as some kind

[897] The work of authors such as Rafael Diáz-Salazar and Jordi López Camps are good examples of these new inclusive readings of laicity. Cf. Díaz-Salazar, *España laica*; cf. López Camps, *Asuntos religiosos*.

[898] "[A]lgo de eso es lo que anhelaba el autor de estas páginas, que más que un discurso a la nación española, son la meditación que hace en algo un ciudadano, decidido a serlo... desde un futuro en el que ciudadanía hispánica y apertura religiosa a la Transcendencia convivan en clara diferencia y fecundación recíproca." González de Cardedal, *España por pensar*, 11; González de Cardedal's theological interpretation of the Spanish situation is an important one as José Casanova points out, cf. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, 259 note 42.; A work with similar aims than that of González de Cardedal and equally influential is the work of the Jesuit Alfonso Álvarez Bolado. For a collection of his essays on the topic cf. Alfonso Álvarez Bolado, *Teología política desde España: Del nacionalcatolicismo y otros ensayos* (Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 1999).

of Catholic neo-confessionalism.[899] This separation supposes the need to develop a civil ethics, with autonomy from religion, which could offer an ethical background to the public sphere.[900]

We can identify a consensus even among authors with different positions on this issue. Even the Spanish bishops, in a document featuring strong assertions against laicism in society, implicitly acknowledge this task for Spanish society.[901] Rafael Diáz-Salazar develops further this concern in his book *España Laica.* Diáz-Salazar suggests the need of a "cultural transition" after the political transition to democracy that the 1978 Constitution supposed.[902] This cultural transition would allow Spanish society to integrate the religious and moral pluralism that has appeared since the second half of the 20th century. Diáz-Salazar proposes a model of laicity which he calls "covenant of cultures." Drawing from Habermas, he proposes to elaborate a common civil ethics for the different cultures present in Spanish society through the dialogue among them. The Catholic Church, the other religions present in Spain, and the different atheist and agnostic movements would be some

[899] Cf. González de Cardedal, *España por pensar*, 312–314 González de Cardedal's work can easily be considerd a Spanish public theology *avant la lettre*.

[900] "Indiquemos sólo de paso el gran tema de la ética civil... Tarea que es sagrada y urgente para una sociedad que no quiera desecarse espiritualmente, y quedar exclusivamente sostenida por la violencia de la ley, la violencia de las armas o los instintos de perduración y afirmación." Ibid., 309.

[901] When describing Spanish society after the 1978 democratic Constitution they affirm that their wish is to "find bit by bit the just social order that allows us to live in accordance with our convictions, in a way that no one tries to impose his points of view on others through unjust or unfaithful means." Conferencia Episcopal Española, *Instrucción pastoral: Orientaciones morales ante la situación actual de España.* (Madrid: EDICE, 2006), para. 21.

[902] Cf. Díaz-Salazar, *España laica*, 9–10.

of these cultures. A "covenant of cultures" would be the fruit of the dialogue among the cultures.[903]

From the foregoing, we can recognize a general consensus regarding the appropriateness of the political and juridical framework of the 1978 Constitution and the need to develop a cultural transition. Nevertheless one issue remains highly polemical and prolongs the debates and tensions: how should we value and approach the unquestionable Catholic influence in Spanish culture and society? This influence is palpable in history, in popular traditions, and even in language.[904] This question refers to the role and evaluation of the cultural Catholicism of many Spaniards we recognized in the research survey of the *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas*. Ultimately, the debate is about the evaluation of a form of public presence of religion in society.

When facing this question, two different positions appear. On the one hand, the laicist position considers this presence of Catholicism in history and society as an obstacle and therefore demands that this influence be reduced as much as possible.[905] Some Catholic authors are close to this position and fear that the preservation of this cultural legacy could

[903] Cf. Ibid., 219ff.

[904] An example of this problem is the polemic around the traditional presence of the military accompanying the procession of Corpus Christi in many Spanish cities. Cf. ABC, "Toledo celebra por primera vez el Corpus sin bandera ni honores militares", June 4, 2010, http://www.abc.es/hemeroteca/historico-04-06-2010/abc/Nacional/toledo-celebra-por-primera-vez-el-corpus-sin-bandera-ni-honores-militares_140232384237.html.

[905] Cf. Díaz-Salazar, *España laica*, 98 Díaz Salazar identifies the philosopher Fernando Savater as one of the major figures of this current.

be understood as a way for the Church to retain unjustified privileges.[906] On the other hand, other Catholic authors see this influence as a valuable heritage to be preserved and integrated in 21st-century Spanish society.[907] The Spanish bishops refer to this heritage as precious moral and spiritual values received from our ancestors.[908] They therefore criticize any position that seeks to build Spanish society by erasing this influence.[909] González de Cardedal, offering an alternative to the extremes of laicism or neoconfesionalism, invites us to adopt a discerning and critical approach to Spain's past in order to recover its best spiritual values in a new way, that is to say, independently from politics.[910]

These alternative understandings of the presence of Catholicism in society reflect alternative understandings of the juridical framework that the 1978 Constitution gives to religions. The more laicist position would be very critical of the specific mention of the

[906] "Los problemas vendrían posteriormente, cuando el parágrafo se interpretó desde una óptica defensora de los antiguos privilegios eclesiásticos, en nombre del reconocimiento de la Iglesia católica y de las creencias de la sociedad." Estrada, *El cristianismo en una sociedad laica*, 152.

[907] Julio Martínez in a reflection with a larger scope than the Spanish situation advocates for a "rooted cosmopolitanism" when thinking about modern citizenship. The expression itself comes from the African author K.A. Appiah. This model proposes to take into account the concrete socio-political situation of a community, including its religious traditions, when developing an open understanding of citizenship. Cf. Martínez, *Ciudadanía, migraciones y religión*, 361.

[908] "[N]o tenemos por qué abandonar otros valores de orden espiritual y moral que forman parte de nuestro patrimonio y que hemos recibido de nuestros antepasados como bienes de valor estimables." Conferencia Episcopal Española, *Orientaciones morales ante la situación actual de España*, 19.

[909] Ibid., para. 13.

[910] "[M]ostrar cómo esa sociedad y esa nueva cultura pueden ser lugar legítimo y fecundo en medio del que se crea, se espere, se ame con verdad a Dios y a los hombres; mostrar cómo la fe no es enemiga de la libertad general ni de las libertades particulares... Se necesita hoy por ello en España un conocimiento y amor profundo al propio pasado, generosa y críticamente conocido, para así poder mirar con confianza y generosidad también hacia el futuro." González de Cardedal, *España por pensar*, 310–311.

Catholic Church in art. 16 of the Constitution[911] and would consider the 1976 and 1979 agreements between the Spanish state and the Vatican as a way to retain a certain confessionalism in society. Often this view is shared by members of other religions. Some Catholic authors acknowledge that the haste with which the agreements between the Vatican and the Spanish state were drawn up can be interpreted as an effort by the Catholic Church to assure its preeminence in society before the Constitutional framework was fully developed.[912] In turn, most Catholic authors consider the general treatment of the Catholic Church in the Spanish juridical framework as a natural expression of the role of Catholicism in Spanish history.[913] It responds in fact to the Constitutional demand in art. 16.3 to take into account the religious beliefs of Spanish society. In fact, the Constitution demanded the establishment of a relationship of cooperation with the Catholic Church and other confessions. The bishop of Barcelona, Lluis Martínez Sistach, in an article on religious freedom, defends the present juridical situation of the Catholic Church compared to other religions, referring to the principle of justice that enjoins treating differently those who are in fact different.[914] He also understands this juridical situation not as a privilege but as a paradigm for religious freedom in Spain as a consequence of the Catholic

[911] "No confession will have state character. The public powers will take into account the religious beliefs of the Spanish society and will maintain the consequent relationships of cooperation with the Catholic Church and the other confessions." Art. 16.3 1978 Spanish Constitution.

[912] Cf. Estrada, *El cristianismo en una sociedad laica*, 152–153.

[913] Cf. *Libertad religiosa y dignidad humana*, 344–348.

[914] Cf. Martínez Sistach, "La libertad religiosa. Relaciones Iglesia-estado," 423.

Church's historical significance. Any other religion would receive the same treatment in the measure that it reaches the same levels of social significance.[915]

Because the problem of the Spanish situation lies in a mistaken assimilation of Spanish identity and Catholicism, the way the Catholic Church intervenes in society becomes a matter of fierce dispute. Regarding this, the most common arguments of the Spanish episcopal documents are based on the natural law tradition [916] This style of arguing is often perceived as an intellectual trick to preserve the Church's unjustified influence on legislation, and therefore on politics.[917] This is the reason which invites us to look for another way of arguing in society which reflects more clearly the actual understanding of a more balanced church-society relationship. This has been the goal of our work in this dissertation and we will now attempt to present it synthetically.

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[915] Cf. Ibid., 431.

[916] As an example of this type of argumentation we need only approach the main document of the Spanish Bishops' Conference regarding laicism and the Spanish moral situation: "[P]ara nosotros es claro que todo lo que sea introducir ideas y costumbres contrarias a la ley natural, fundada en la recta razón y en el patrimonio espiritual y moral históricamente acumulado por las sociedades, debilita los fundamentos de la justicia y deteriora la vida de las personas y de la sociedad entera." Conferencia Episcopal Española, *Orientaciones morales ante la situación actual de España*, para. 17.

[917] Diaz-Salazar expresses very strongly, from Catholic grounds, this rejection of the natural law tradition: "Conscientes de la distinción entre moral y derecho, [los sujetos éticos de una sociedad] desean establecer una moralidad básica para toda ley. En este sentido, la ética de una sociedad pluralista es laica; es decir, no está predeterminada por un principio externo a la propia sociedad, como sería la ley natural o Dios." Díaz-Salazar, *España laica*; "Desde las tradiciones religiosas se oyen voces que reclaman que ellas con el albacea de unos valores morales que se encuentran en el corazón de los hombres. Se alude a la Ley natural que debe presidir todos los actos políticos... no resulta apropiado en este tema pretender que existe una moral natural, asumida como verdad previa, a la cual debe remitirse posteriormente cualquier consenso ético." López Camps, *Asuntos religiosos*, 307. The rejection of these two Catholic authors of the natural law tradition voices a broader opinion in society but raises many theoretical problems. It is clear to me that they are reacting to a misuse of the natural law tradition unfaithful to the depth of authentic understandings of it such as that of Thomas Aquinas.

## III. A PUBLIC THEOLOGY FOR SPAIN

After this reflection on the Spanish case of religious pluralism, we will now gather the various insights we have highlighted throughout this work. We will then attempt to propose the actual shape of a public theology suitable to present Spanish society, as has been our goal from the outset. Given the Catholic perspective, context, and goal of this work, the proposal is for a Catholic public theology. An additional benefit of this analysis is that it may also be valuable for other Christian denominations now present in growing numbers in Spain. In a final section, we will apply our proposal for public theology to two disputed social issues in contemporary Spain: the proper fiscal policy with which to face the present economic crisis, and the role of centers of religious initiative in the Spanish educational system. In both cases we will propose how the Catholic Church may best intervene and foster social debate from a public theology perspective.

### 1. THE CONTEXT: SPANISH PLURALISM

The first thing to point out about pluralism in Spain is that the Spanish society needs a more positive assessment of it. The most common interpretations of pluralism in Spain are characterized by fear, alarm and suspicion. In spite of these interpretations, we should see pluralism as a historical fact, a sign of the times. This historical fact has deeply shaped Spanish history (the initial Visigoth period, the Middle Ages, the disenchantment process in the 19$^{th}$ century, contemporary migration movements). In this sense, aided by David Tracy's thought, we should maintain a theological and Johannine view of the world and society. We will recognize the present situation of religious and cultural pluralism as

ambiguous but ultimately a locus for God's revelation.[918] Therefore contemporary pluralism is a richness and a possibility.[919] Moreover, following Valadier, we can consider pluralism as the condition of possibility of modern democracy,[920] and hence a major trait of the ideal of society that the 1978 Constitution represents.

This more positive appreciation of pluralism begins by recognizing pluralism, not just as a feature of modern societies, but also as a trait of the Christian faith as David Tracy reminds us.[921] Scripture is plural in its approaches to God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ. The different plural Scriptural genres (proclamation, narrative, apocalyptic and doctrine, symbol and reflective thought) complement each other in order to present images of God and Jesus Christ.[922] The theologian's interpretation of revelation will necessarily be plural because it is reached in light of the questions posed by the situation.[923] Finally, theological insights will have plural expressions in order to reach the various publics to which it is

[918] Cf. Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 49.

[919] Cf. Ibid., xi.

[920] Cf. Valadier, *L'Église en procès*, 36.

[921] "The reality of diversity must be affirmed as fact in the New Testament, in the entire Christian tradition, in the contemporary Christian community, in the diverse life journeys and discernments in the contemporary situation. The reality of pluralism is a value: a value to enrich each by impelling new journeys into both particularity and ecumenicity." Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 254; cf. also ibid., 306; Tracy and Valadier agree on this point although Valadier has not develop the issue as much as Tracy, cf. Valadier, *L'Église en procès*, 202ff.

[922] Cf. Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 265ff.

[923] Cf. Ibid., 249–250 and 252ff.

addressed. This is the role of systematic, fundamental and practical theologies.[924] It is, therefore, possible to identify pluralism as a trait of the Church and even of Scripture, although this supposes, as Tracy also suggests, that we also need criteria of truth-status to judge which expressions actually reflect God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ.[925]

Given the ambiguous character of the world, we should enlighten Tracy's view of pluralism with Valadier's approach to it. Valadier is much more attentive to the actual conditions and circumstances of society, that is to say, to history. These actual traits of society correspond, in Tracy's thought, to what he calls the socio-political conditions. These conditions are then interpreted at an existential level in what Tracy calls the human situation.[926] Thus, we should take into account the socio-economic and political conditions of contemporary Spanish society, conditions described by the social sciences. This includes Spanish history and the way pluralism has been formed there. These elements should be at the foundation of any public theology reflection addressed to Spanish society.

We have seen how Spain is a culture strongly shaped by Catholicism, and this has been enacted in a nearly exclusive way since the 16th century. This past supposes even today a

[924] "Then they may recognize the reality of three publics of theology grounded in the strictly theological realities of church and world, and three distinct but related sets of criteria proper to the claims to meaning and truth in each public grounded in the intrinsic publicness of the affirmation of God." Ibid., 54.

[925] Cf. Ibid., 62.

[926] "Then, with Tillich, we turn to the notion of the situation as the 'creative interpretations of existence': those interpretations which are carried out in every period of history under all kinds of psychological and sociological conditions. The 'situation' is not, of course, independent of these factors but does bear a relative autonomy from those conditions by its employment of the creative, productive power of imagination impelling every classic cultural expression." Ibid., 340. Tracy's critical correlation happens between Revelation and this higher level interpretation of the situation.

large cultural Catholicism coloring all society. The introduction of the major values of political liberalism in the 19th and 20th century was undertaken in many cases in strong opposition to that background Catholic culture. This has produced a mindset of staunch opposition to the Catholic Church in parts of Spanish society. Today many Spaniards perceive this institution to be attempting to impose its views on what it means to be Spanish. Since the 90s increasing numbers of adherents of non-Catholic religions are living in Spain, many of them Muslims. These novel elements introduce a new degree of complexity to Spanish pluralism.

Various Spanish authors working in ways that resemble a public theology style seem to interpret the present Spanish situation, as shaped by the previous conditions, as a question of identity. A question that repeats itself in the writing of many authors is, what does it mean to be a Spaniard when we are no longer assumed to be Catholics? The actual answer to this question will determine the way we approach other social issues such as those involving politics, economics or immigration.

But aside from this overarching question, the socio-economic conditions of Spanish society imply several challenges for a public theology.

First, because of the strong influence of Catholicism in Spanish culture, language and folklore, an important point is to see how we can honor the value of this past influence, and, at the same time, allow the present pluralism to shape society. A careful balancing act along these lines will be required. A public theology in Spain should give an account of the background Catholic culture and integrate it in the dialogue with other religions and

positions. Examples of these challenges are the controversies about the presence of Nativity scenes in public schools or about the traditional presence of public officials in Catholic processions.

Second, in modern Spanish society there are two major and very different dialogue partners of the Catholic Church in society: unbelievers and Muslims. A theology brought into public in Spain should be able to address these two different groups. This supposes a double difficulty. First our theological argument must be able to address properly each community. And, second, we should be able to find among these groups interlocutors ready and formed to start a dialogue with us in terms of public theology. Muslims are already organized in several associations easily identifiable (e.g. *Comisión Islámica de España*, *Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España*). In the case of un-believers, although there are associations that explicitly defend and promote a more laicist view of society (e.g. *Asociación Europa Laica)*, it is more difficult to identify dialogue partners who could be considered authorized representatives of this position.

Third, because of the circumstances of Spanish history, particularly the events during the 20$^{th}$ century (civil war and Franco dictatorship), when the Church intervenes in social issues it might find a tense ambiance and even a suspicious reaction. A public theology in Spain should be able to participate in conversation where tension is present. This participation should be able to keep in mind the objective of conversation and understanding in spite of the tenser context. After the unilateral approval of various laws on morals by the Socialist government in 2004 (e.g. gay marriage, easier procedures for

divorce) a strong rupture occurred between the government and the Catholic Church. The Church took strong condemnatory positions against the government and organized several public demonstrations. This is an example of the tense social ambiance in which public theology – which is based on conversation – has to be implemented.

Finally, Spanish culture has become accustomed to identify Catholicism and politics, and this identification stays in the cultural unconscious of many Spaniards. Any theological argument addressing social issues risks being interpreted as unquestioned political endorsement of the Church by one party or the other. A theology done in public in Spain should avoid this risk of political manipulation. Often, Catholic positions in terms of morals will be co-opted by right-wing parties, presenting themselves as representatives of the Church's position. In turn, Catholic positions in terms of economic policy, welfare and attention to the poor risk being co-opted by left-wing parties. They may assert than the truly Catholic position is theirs. The Church should be able to defend its principles and convictions without being identified with any party.

## 2. THE METHOD

As stated in the first chapter, any method we propose for some type of public theology is ultimately a proposal regarding how to mediate the Christian symbols and narratives to the society. In the second chapter we saw how Tracy's critical-correlational paradigm is a very appropriate understanding of this mediation and a more fitting one than others we have seen. However, a robust and sound anthropological framework will help this paradigm to

inspire actual social initiatives. Valadier is an important help when attempting this in a more secularized European setting.

I propose then a two-level consideration of the method for public theology. A first level deals with the way to argue on social issues, drawing from Christian symbols and narratives. This level consists in Tracy's critical correlation used to address our argument to other parties, in the Spanish case unbelievers and Muslims. But Tracy's critical correlation also gives us a way to receive the arguments that the other will, in turn, address to us. Through the analogical imagination we can address, receive and process the arguments raised within the social dialogue.

A second level of the public theology will deal with the way that theological discussion on social issues is inserted in society's life and how the results of the discussion actually move people to act. This level consists in Paul Valadier's political ethics and his understanding of the role and functioning of human conscience.

When looking attentively at the two-level approach to public theology, we can identify in it one of Tracy's insights: the idea of practical theology interpreting the conclusions of systematic theology in the plausibility structure of society.[927] In our case, Tracy offers a hermeneutical approach to systematic theology, and Valadier the practical theology framework within which to express it. Nevertheless, in my proposal, the hermeneutical approach to Christian symbols and narratives, which corresponds more to systematic

[927] "My hypothesis is that the most helpful way to clarify this complexity is to propose the existence of three distinct but related disciplines in theology: fundamental, systematic, and practical theologies. Each discipline is distinct yet internally related to the other two. Those internal relationships are chiefly determined by the strictly theological needs for publicness (the logical entailment of the affirmation of God) and for attention to the empirical-social-historical realities of three publics (the logical entailment of the coaffirmation of church and the world in the affirmation of God)." Ibid., 56.

theology in Tracy's model, will not be translated to a more secular language. It should be actually integrated in the final theological proposal we are developing. This is supported by Tracy's subsequent blurring of the distinctions among theological disciplines he proposed in *The Analogical Imagination*.[928] In the same sense, many U.S. Catholic public theologians have presented these two dimensions of Tracy's thought in an integrated way.[929]

Although our effort to develop this method of public theology may seem to be excessively intellectual and detached, in fact, this effort has larger and more important consequences. Any method in theology implicitly supposes a view of the human being and God, and therefore a view of society and the church.[930] Our own clarification on the way to argue theologically about public issues in Spain is ultimately a clarification about the Church-society relationship and also about Christian identity. Rather than being characterized as reductionist or narrow, it actually opens out to a comprehensive vision of Christian life in the contemporary world.

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[928] Cf. Martinez, *Confronting the Mystery of God: Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies*, 221.

[929] The highly theological approach that Michael and Kenneth Himes take in their work is the best example of this practical theology which includes the interpretation of the Christian symbols. Cf. Himes and Himes, *Fullness of Faith*.

[930] Regarding this, Paul Tillich asserts about methods in theology: "A method is not an 'indifferent net' in which reality is caught, but the method is an element of the reality itself. In at least one respect the description of a method is a description of a decisive aspect of the object to which it is applied. The cognitive relation itself, quite apart from any special act of cognition, reveals something about the object, as well as about the subject, in the relation." Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:60.

### a) *David Tracy: A Mutually-Critical Correlation between the Event of Jesus Christ and the Situation.*

The core of the public theology I propose in this work consists in a way to mediate, to correlate, Christian symbols and narratives with the social reality. As already stated, David Tracy's critical correlational model represents a very insightful approach to this problem. It is an approach that balances two main claims that the Second Vatican Council stated: the preeminence of Christ in order to understand the human being and, thus, the world;[931] as well as the autonomy of earthly affairs;[932] all this considering a social context shaped by moral, cultural and religious pluralism.

Tracy synthesizes his position in a rather simple scheme. His theological method consists in "mutually critical correlations between an interpretation of the event (and the traditions and forms mediating the event in the present) and an interpretation of the situation (and the traditions and forms mediating that reality)."[933] Thus, one pole of Tracy's critical correlation[934] would be the event of Jesus Christ, that is to say, Jesus Christ as the here-and-now manifestation of God's own self as he is mediated through Scripture and tradition.[935] The other pole would be what Tracy calls the human situation; that is to say,

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[931] Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (hereafter GS), paragraph *22.*

[932] GS, paragraph 36.

[933] Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 406; Tracy struggled at some point with critiques coming from more practical theologies regarding his approach, cf. Ibid., 69ff; in later books Tracy will fully assert his hermeneutical approach to the issues, cf. Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity*, 3ff; Cf. also Tracy, *Dialogue with the Other*, 3ff.

[934] Cf. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:60.

[935] Cf. Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 234ff.

the interpretation of contemporary human existence, an interpretation which includes the socio-economic circumstances.[936]

David Hollenbach has interpreted this Tracian scheme as reflecting the traditional four sources of moral theology: Scripture, tradition, natural reason and experience.[937] This interpretation may be said to excessively simplify Tracy's position, but it is still useful in order to imagine actual applications. Therefore the critical correlation happens between our experience of Christ according to the normative expression of Scripture and our experience, and others' experience of the society and the world. Our interpretations of the event of Jesus Christ should also be confronted with the Church's interpretations of the same event throughout history. In the case of social issues, the Church's interpretation of the event of Jesus Christ is expressed in its social teaching. The experiences of society and the world should be read in the light of the conditions of society, described by the social sciences. Afterwards, we should interpret them philosophically, furnishing a comprehensive human reading of the situation.

In the case of David Tracy, this correlation is accomplished through an interpretation of the religious symbols and narratives, the religious classics, in the light of the questions

[936] Cf. Ibid., 340ff; in his understanding of theology as a critical correlation and of the human situation Tracy is very much inspired by Paul Tillich. Cf. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:3–68.

[937] "The hermeneutic of critical correlation illustrated in these two examples is directly relevant to the debate about the distinctiveness of Christian ethics... The four sources of insight for Christian ethics, however, cannot be cleanly separated from each other this way. These sources... mutually condition and mutually critique each other." Hollenbach, "Fundamental Theology and the Christian Moral Life," 182.

posed by the human situation.[938] This interpretation supposes a movement from the manifestation of the event, then to the proclamation of that event, and finally to action.[939] The experience of manifestation corresponds to the language of analogy, the experience of proclamation to that of dialectics.[940] These two movements are then synthetized in a higher synthesis reflecting the similarities in difference between "event" and "the world" through the analogical imagination.[941] Although Tracy's model of interpretation supposes a moment of critical negation of the analogy, the final result is a positive correlation, analogy, between the event of Jesus Christ and the world. Nevertheless, the role and importance of this moment of negative critique of the religious classics has been more prominently emphasized in later books by him.[942]

This Tracian model mediates in a very balanced way Revelation and history. It also answers the need for a more robust proclamation of the Christian symbols in modern

[938] Cf. Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 405.

[939] Cf. Ibid.

[940] For Tracy's understanding of analogy and dialectics in theology cf. Ibid., 408–421.

[941] "[T]he major explicitly analogical traditions in theology have correctly insisted that in the theological use of analogies, the dissimilarities between God and world are as great as the similarities; the *via eminentiae* is possible only on condition of its constant fidelity to the *via negationis*." Ibid., 409.

[942] "[T]heologians should be alert as well to the need for any hermeneutics of suspicion that can further instruct their own religious suspicion of the endemic, unconscious reality of either sin, *avidya*, or dishonor." Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity*, 97; Gaspar Martínez confirms this evolution in Tracy's thought: "Theologically speaking, the analogy-led ordered relations concerning God, the self, and the world started to become more problematic and less objectifiable the more reason became hermeneutized and the presence of ambiguity in history more manifest." Martinez, *Confronting the Mystery of God: Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies*, 232–233.

pluralistic societies like the Spanish one. We will see how this model possesses resources to answer the challenges and risks that the Spanish situation poses.

### b) *Paul Valadier: A Conscience-Based Anthropology Enlightened by Plural Dialogue about Moral Cases.*

Paul Valadier, thanks to his constant concern for dialogue in secularized societies, offers us a social and anthropological framework in which to develop Tracy's critical-correlational model. This framework allows us to connect Tracy's way of arguing in pluralistic societies with the main concern of moral theology, the answer to the question what should I do? Firstly, Valadier proposes the development of a common morality for pluralistic societies[943] but his suggestion of ways to discuss this common morality does not consider actual ways for religions to introduce their intellectual resources and imagination.[944] That is the reason why we opt for Tracy's critical-correlational model as the way to channel this exchange. But, secondly, because Valadier proposes a moral theology framework that is compelling enough for secularized societies, it can be the framework in which to develop the critical-correlational method. This framework is particularly valuable for the Spanish reality for different reasons. First it provides an actual shape to the idea of forums in which to build a common morality for modern Spanish pluralistic society, realizing Diaz-Salazar's "covenant of cultures." Second, it answers an important modern

[943] Cf. Valadier, *Inévitable morale*, 208ff.

[944] "[La théologie chrétienne] propose l'entrée dans un échange permanent grâce auquel chacun éprouve ses raisons propres en entendant les raisons d'autrui, et dépasse progressivement les limites de ses aperceptions pour s'ouvrir à plus d'universel, sans prétendre jamais coïncider avec cet idéal... il s'agit de le fortifier [le lien social] dans le jeu même de la parole échangée selon les règles de la raison et de la communication." Valadier, *Éloge de la conscience*, 167–168.

Nietzschean critique of Christian ethics as destroying the will to life; indeed, this critique is at the bottom of many of the more radical lacist groups in Spain. Finally, it overcomes the critique of many laicist authors that the Catholic Church tries to impose its morals view on society. The emphasis on the role of conscience judging individual cases potentially assuages any suspicion of Catholic moral imposition.

We can consider Paul Valadier's position as a reflection adapted to the plausibility structure of secularized societies, which he sees very much determined by Nietzsche. Valadier is reacting mostly to the Nietzscheian critique of ethics, and especially Christian ethics, as an imposed framework that destroys our will to live.[945] This Nietzscheian critique leads the modern person to nihilism, to despair from building a better self or a better society.[946] In response to this modern temptation, Valadier stresses the role of human freedom in a moral decision,[947] a freedom that also takes the human desire into account.[948]And this freedom is placed in the human conscience for modern thinkers.[949] Because of the complexity of modern life, Valadier sees modern moral theology as constant

[945] Cf. Valadier, *Jésus-Christ ou Dionysos*, 139ff.

[946] Cf. Valadier, *Inévitable morale*, 97 Valadier includes in this temptation of nihilism moral positions that impose high moral ideas without offering the actual means to attain them.

[947] Cf. for example Valadier, *Jésus-Christ Ou Dionysos*, 61ff.

[948] "L'inculcation des règles admises risque bien d'aboutir à la paralysie ou à l'étouffement si elle ne suscite pas, en l'infant qui les intériorise, le désir." Valadier, *Éloge de la conscience*, 148.

[949] "[L]a référence à la conscience renvoie bien à un trait caractéristique de la modernité philosophique et théologique. Traiter de la conscience morale consiste en réalité à aborder la nature même de la vie morale en son point central: la décision, c'est-à-dire le choix que fait une personne de s'engager sur un acte qu'elle assume de manière à pouvoir en rendre compte devant elle-même comme devant autrui, et devant Dieu si elle est croyante." Ibid., 11.

moral deliberation on the different complex cases that appear[950] in order for human conscience to take a position and, freely and willingly, make a moral decision.[951]

However, Valadier wants to avoid the danger of individualism in the modern view of human beings. Therefore, he develops the way the individual conscience is connected with society. The study of the mechanism of this connection, and the ways to participate in them, allows him also to overcome the danger of despair due to the sheer complexity and pluralism of modern societies. Individual conscience is free and should decide according to its best lights. However, Valadier is very clear on the social dimension of the individual conscience: Conscience should be formed and constantly enlightened by society through discussion between the communities present in it.[952] Individuals are also inserted in the different social and political structures, the "long mediations." Therefore, any political ethics needs to go beyond interpersonal relations and think in terms of institutional action.[953] The individual's place and responsibility in these institutional structures gives him the actual measure of his responsibility and the actual scope of moral decision-making when facing a social problem.[954]

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[950] "La morale n'est pas morte si les préoccupations morales refont surface, c'est très étrangement au premier abord par la nécessité de résoudre des cas, ou de trouver des solutions dans des situations dont personne ne paraît détenir assurément la clé." Ibid., 17.

[951] Cf. Valadier, *Agir en politique*, 135ff.

[952] Cf. Valadier, *Inévitable morale*, 208ff.

[953] Cf. Valadier, *Agir en politique*, 136–137.

[954] Cf. Ibid., 136ff.

In the case of complex and pluralistic modern societies, Valadier sees ethics as a dialogical process. It requires discussion of the scientific visions and the different moral positions in society.[955]As happens in classic casuistry, this dialogue will be focused on the deliberation about the different complex cases that will appear. This dialogue creates a common morality of the plural society, a morality that enlightens the individual conscience.[956] Valadier sees the ethical committees as the locus of this dialogue.[957]

Of course, in the case of a Christian's conscience, Valadier sees more forces playing out. Grace strengthens the Christian, and Scripture and the teaching of the Christian community enlightens her.[958] But Valadier considers that after being strengthened and enlightened by her faith, the Christian will make moral decisions inside the framework of the common rules and conditions of modern societies. These Christians symbols and narratives influence society mostly through the participation of Christians in social dialogue.

*c) CONCLUSION*

Therefore, I propose to employ the critical-correlational model of David Tracy as the basic understanding of how to share our positions in society about the common good of

[955] Cf Valadier, *Inévitable Morale*, 208.

[956] "Loin d'être acceptation servile du relativisme, la discussion rend possible la moralisation de la décision. On ne préserve nullement la rigueur des principes moraux en s'enfermant dans le refus du débat, ou en prétendant que la décision à prendre se déduit de valeurs assurément déterminées." Valadier, *Agir en politique*, 105; cf. Valadier, *Éloge de la conscience*, 164ff.

[957] Cf. Valadier, *Inévitable morale*, 45.

[958] Cf. Valadier, *La condition chrétienne*, 55ff.

society, in a way that fully reflects the underlying Christian inspiration. Tracy's model allows us then to listen to what others in society have to say, in the Spanish case unbelievers and Muslims. Thus, Tracy's analogical imagination allows us to share our views on reality centered in the event of Jesus Christ and receive alternative views coming from other positions. It manages to do so without either imposing the Christ event or renouncing it.

Paul Valadier will, then, provide us with the social and anthropological setting where the analogical imagination is put into practice. The critical-correlational model would be the way to participate in this social debate in order to build a common morality that may enlighten the individuals' conscience in order to act ethically in society. Thus, we can say that the critical-correlational model will be the way to articulate the level of ethics (*morale*) in Paul Valadier's thought. Valadier identifies this level as the one where we share our views on issues, trying to universalize the conclusions.[959]

### 3. THE IMPLEMENTATION

We have already seen the conditions of the Spanish context into which we seek to introduce theology in public. We have also proposed a method for this public theology drawing from two major authors we have studied, David Tracy and Paul Valadier. I will now present some reflections regarding the possibilities and pitfalls one may experience when trying to bring theology in public into the Spanish context.

[959] Cf. Valadier, *Inévitable morale*, 189ff.

*a) THE CONDITIONS OF THE DIALOGUE*

The previous chapter demonstrated that the type of dialogue proposed here should be a theologically open debate, not a neutral and aseptic discussion on social issues. That is the only way to allow the interreligious dimension of public-theology dialogue to gain its full scope. We have also noted how this openness of the debate requires setting some parameters in which dialogue can take place in order to channel it appropriately. In the case of the dialogue with Muslims I propose to use the category of public religion as precondition and the pluralistic common good as the goal of the dialogue.

The category of public religion, in the case of Spain, may very well be interpreted as including a high degree of respect for the Spanish Constitution and the procedures it establishes. The 1978 Constitution takes into account the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international agreements, moreover it identifies the dignity of the human person as a major criterion of the Spanish juridical framework (art.10.1). Therefore, it may embody the conditions that José Casanova proposed with his category of a public religion. This does not mean that the 1978 Spanish Constitution, or the subsequent juridical developments, are unchangeable. It means that any change should follow the procedures which exist by means of legitimate democratic institutions.

Setting a pluralistic understanding of the common good as a goal of the public-theology dialogue, what we are proposing is a way to implement Diaz-Salazar's idea of a "covenant of cultures" in Spain.[960]Compared to other concepts, the common good is a more familiar

[960] Cf. Díaz-Salazar, *España laica*, 260ff.

term in the Spanish culture. We have seen how the concept of common good is very much identified today with the Catholic tradition; therefore, it is easily understandable for the Catholic-shaped Spanish culture. Its interpretation integrating social pluralism will allow for the very cultural and religious dialogue that the Spanish society needs in order to take a step forward. However, we already observed in the previous chapter how this concept should be used cautiously, allowing the other, either Muslim or un-believer, to find analogies to this term in her own cultural view. This is important in order to avoid any impression of a Catholic cultural imposition.

*b) THE LOCUS OF PUBLIC THEOLOGY*

One of the most defining conditions when trying to develop this public theology is the institutions and forums in which it can be implemented – the *loci* of public theology. The previous chapters have surfaced various suggestion regarding these *loci*. Not all of these *loci* are possible in Spain right now, and this will determine very much the final shape of our public theology proposal.

In the first chapter we saw how the social teaching documents of the U.S. bishops, particularly *The Challenge of Peace* and *Economic Justice for All,* may be considered as extremely good examples of public theology. This may invite us to think of the Catholic Church's *magisterium* as a good *locus* to develop public theology. However, this is not the case in general in the Church, and in particular in Spain.[961] Both U.S. documents were

[961] We mentioned how the main way of arguing in the documents of the Spanish Bishops conference is based on the natural law tradition. Cf. Conferencia Episcopal Española, *Orientaciones morales ante la situación actual de España*, para. 17.

written in the 1980s and since then no *magisterial* document has followed the same process of drafting as they did. Moreover, the present tendency in the papal *magisterium*, reflected very much in the Spanish episcopal *magisterium,* favors developing an argument based on the natural law tradition. Therefore, most probably public theology will not influence the Church's *magisterium,* at least for some time.

Another possible *locus* for the development of public theology is academic theological research. This may very well be a promising place for reflecting and writing publicly on theology. However, the Spanish context differs in important ways from the U.S. one in which public theology was first developed: since 1845 theology has not been present in the civil university because it is not considered a scientific discipline.[962] The only place to study theology is inside ecclesiastical theology faculties. This makes contact with other disciplines outside theology, as well as with other social positions, less frequent. Therefore the absence of theology from the civil university tends to make theology adopt a language more exclusively addressed to the public of the church.

The main and more interesting *loci* for the development of a public theology will be different societal instances in which dialogue on social issues will take place. We have mentioned how Valadier points out the place of governmental and civil society ethical committees as a main place for public moral discussion. Apart from these more formal *loci*,

[962] González de Cardedal identifies in this absence of theology from the university setting and its reduction to the seminaries, a reason for the inability of the Catholic Church in Spain to undo by itself the faulty identification with the state and politics. Cf. González de Cardedal, *España por pensar*, 234ff. This suppression of the theology faculties was surprisingly accomplished in agreement between the liberal governments and the Church. Only later, following a call from Leo XIII, would the Catholic Church open pontifical universities in Spain where theology could be studied.

other important places will be various points of encounter between the different moral communities present in Spain. Examples of these *loci* include: the collaboration between different NGOs, conferences or meetings on particular social issues, Catholic associations' public statements on different issues,[963] spaces of interreligious dialogue, and articles and collaboration in the media.[964] These are the most prevalent and promising occasions for structured ethical discussion that will allow public theology to be expressed.

*c) THE ANSWER TO THE CHALLENGES OF THE SPANISH CONTEXT*

We identified in the Spanish situation of religious pluralism various challenges that may hinder the implementation of theology into public life. I want now to present a constructive answer to these challenges that may define more clearly the public theology we are proposing.

*i. The Previous Catholic Cultural Background*

The previous Catholic cultural background needs not be a problem when dealing with religious pluralism. In this sense, it is enlightening how Abdullahi A. An-Na'im, reflecting on the background presence of the Muslim tradition in other societies, reminds us of the

[963] Good examples of the type of statements I am referring to are the documents of the Society of Jesus in Spain about the economic crisis and about inmigration: Apostolado Social de la Compañía de Jesús en España, "Crisis prolongada, solidaridad reforzada," 2011, http://issuu.com/prensajesuitas/docs/crisis_prolongada_solidaridad_reforzada/1; Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes España, "Superar fronteras", 2011, http://issuu.com/prensajesuitas/docs/superar_fronteras_web/1. These documents could introduce a more theological approach to the topics they are dealing with, and they may thus constitute great examples of a theology done in public.

[964] The theologian Olegario González de Cardedal has developed most of his public theology, if we can use this term, through the publication of opinion articles in major Spanish newspapers. Cf. González de Cardedal, *España por pensar*.

constant need to renegotiate the public role of religion. This negotiation should be done in function of the characteristics of each society.[965] In this same spirit, I will follow González de Cardedal's suggestion of developing an attitude of deep discernment toward Catholic symbols and traditions in Spanish culture.[966] In this sense, previous Catholic cultural influence can be integrated into the critical-correlational model, understanding it in two ways. First, this previous Catholic culture is part of the pre-understanding that shapes any interpretation of reality in Spanish society.[967] Tracy speaks of any interpretation being a mediation between past and present.[968] Second, this Catholic cultural background being formed mainly by the presence of religious symbols, is an expression of the public role of religion in society that we are trying to promote here. In Tracian terms, these symbols are classic expressions of the culture that convey a message of truth and therefore may speak to anyone in society.[969] All this prompts us to demand a consideration of the presence of religious symbols and religious sensibilities in Spanish society beyond a mere neutral public sphere. However, in the critical-correlational model, this previous background is not maintained at any price. We have seen how Tracy has developed a sharper understanding of the critical interpretation of religious classics in his later work. Since the appearance of his

[965] "As comparative reflection on the experiences of Islamic and other societies readily reveals, the public role of religion is being constantly negotiated and renegotiated among different actors. Since this process is deeply contextual, however, the complex role of religion in the political life of any society should be understood on its own epistemological, political, and cultural terms." An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State*, 292.

[966] Cf. González de Cardedal, *España por pensar*, 310–311.

[967] Cf. Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 118.

[968] Cf. Ibid., 99.

[969] Cf. Ibid., 154ff.

book *Plurality and Ambiguity*, Tracy has emphasized more thoroughly the need for a critical approach to religious classics in order to recover them in their authentic meaning.[970] This critical approach to the pre-understandings of the culture expresses the need for constant discernment and social discussion about the particular presences of religion in society in order to judge if they are appropriate or not.

### *ii. The Dialogue-Partners*

In terms of the dialogue partners of the critical-correlational model, we have seen that in Spain they will be not just members of other religions but will include also nonbelievers. In this sense, the situation resembles the approach that Benedict XVI adopted in his discourse in Assisi in October 2011. In this discourse the Pope addressed, apart from members of other religions, those nonbelievers who are seeking answers to their existential questions.[971]

In the case of Muslims, it is easy to apply the model we are proposing to a conversation with them using the analogical imagination to share reciprocally our insights on social issues based on our own religious symbols. Nevertheless, the reality of Muslims in Spain

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[970] "All seemingly apolitical readings of the religious classics are as influenced by society and history as any self-consciously ethical-political reading. They all demand some critical theoretical analysis if they are not to delude themselves with appeals to some pure experience that their own discourse and action will always already betray. For neither the world nor language is pure." Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity*, 107.

[971] "In addition to the two phenomena of religion and anti-religion, a further basic orientation is found in the growing world of agnosticism: people to whom the gift of faith has not been given, but who are nevertheless on the lookout for truth, searching for God. Such people do not simply assert: 'There is no God.' They suffer from his absence and yet are inwardly making their way towards him, inasmuch as they seek truth and goodness." Benedict XVI, "Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI at the Meeting for Peace in Assisi", October 27, 2011, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/october/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20111027_assisi_en.html.

demands that public theologians display historical patience. Muslim communities in Spain today consist mainly of people of recent immigrant origins and of low cultural and educational status. Therefore, for a considerable period of time, there will not be many interlocutors among Muslims in Spain able to sustain a public-theology conversation with the degree of openness we proposed in the previous chapter. Public theology may still convey its arguments to the Muslim community and develop the conversation with those able to engage in such a conversation. This small-scale effort will help in the long term to habituate Spanish society to this type of conversation. It is also possible to establish conversations with some important foreign Muslim scholars such as the ones we have studied in our work, and then share this conversation with Spanish society. Moreover, the fact that Spanish Muslims belong mostly to Sunni Islam supposes that there will be less room for a critical approach to Muslim sources. Their positions will probably look more like the position of the authors we classified as more cultural (Tariq Ramadan and Alli Allawi).

In the case of unbelievers, the conversation may be more complex because some of the laicist movements in Spain radically reject any role for religious symbols in public conversation.[972] I believe that the major emphasis should be placed on the common questions that we are all asking,[973] what Tracy calls the interpretations of the human

[972] Cf. for example Asociación Europa Laica, "Laicismo.org: El observatorio de la laicidad", 2010, http://www.laicismo.org/; for a very good overview of the different laicist movements in Spain cf. Díaz-Salazar, *España laica*, 104–149.

[973] "[T]he questions which religion addresses are the fundamental existential questions of the meaning and truth of individual, communal and historical existence as related to, indeed as both participating in and distanced from, what is sensed as the whole of reality." Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 158.

situation. We should then try to show how the unbelieving position is another alternative, with its own cultural classics, trying to answer these existential questions. Also we should identify in the undifferentiated unbelieving position the actual alternative cultural communities that hold this position.[974] The effort to situate the conversation at this level may not be easy at times, but I think it is a condition for entering the conversation in a way that allows us to fully develop our argument.

### *iii. A More Tense Dialogue*

It is indeed fully possible to develop a public-theology conversation in a society where the presence of religious positions in the public debate is more polemic. Paul Valadier's idea of the judiciary-process genre as the style to conduct theology in such a setting is particularly enlightening. Tensions and contentious claims surely surface in the conversation, but the very fact of holding the conversation, in a form close to a judiciary process, is already a proof that we believe we can dialogue and achieve a consensus.[975]

This possibility of a more tense type of dialogue is also well expressed in the back and forth movement of a conversation that Tracy proposes. When approaching the religious classics, either ours or the others', there is a double movement of intensification and distanciation. The goal is to arrive at a better understanding and to get to know the other, but this goal demands also at times an attitude of negation of one's position. For Tracy,

[974] I agree on this point with Díaz-Salazar when he identifies in modern Spanish societies different "civil society public cultures" among them he identifies the Catholic Church and different laicist associations and movements. Cf. Díaz-Salazar, *España laica*, 261ff.

[975] Cf. Valadier, *L'Église En Procès*, 7ff.

conflict is a natural part of any conversation. However, he differentiates between a healthy conflict and an unhealthy controversy – which might constitute a sign of a mere will to power. A conflict will be a healthy one when it allows the subject matter of the conversation to take over the conversation itself.[976] Tracy expresses also a need for moments of self-affirmation in any conversation with the articulation of two different moments, which he calls "self-exposure" and "self-respect" moments, when addressing the other in society.[977] This understanding of the dynamic of interpretation and conversation allows us to integrate the necessary self-affirmation and a strong stance in the face of the other. But these moments of self-affirmation are not an end point to the conversation, but rather a necessary step in order to achieve a higher understanding and agreement.

In the Spanish societal debate there are, therefore, very different actors and an inevitable background tension. This fact highlights an important intuition in Tracy's thought: the idea of three publics for theology which should be addressed differently: society, academia and the church.[978] The identification of different audiences for theology in a society – a natural expression of the fact of pluralism— should not lead us to treat the

[976] "Conflict, however, has a second meaning beyond the empirical reality: namely, the inevitable conflicts that emerge in genuine conversation as the dialectic of question and answer elicited by fidelity to the subject matter takes over. If the conversation ideal is not allowed, one will find conflict as mere controversy and polemics; if conversation is allowed, conflict will recur but under the control of subject matter." Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 178 note 1.

[977] Cf. Ibid., 453.

[978] Cf. Ibid., 3ff.

three public as completely isolated one from the other.[979] This insight rather supposes that the way we can argue when addressing one public will be very different from the way to address the others, even if the ideas at the bottom are the same. The reality of the Spanish situation supposes that the way we will argue with Muslims and non-believers in order to build the common good will be different from the way we can subsequently share these insights with the church.

González de Cardedal appears to identify another risk related to the tensions of the dialogue: a historical difficulty in Spanish culture regarding dialogue between different positions, what he calls Spanish *numantinism.*[980] I resist considering this an impossible obstacle. I wonder whether we might consider this historic cultural inertia a good expression of what the Church's social tradition calls social sin.[981] Instead of being paralyzed by this, I rather envision an important and constructive task for the Church in Spain as helping the culture overcome this social sin.

[979] Gaspar Martínez points out in this sense how Tracy has blurred the separation between the publics in later works. "Tracy's attempt to name God, therefore, cannot be easily located in either of the three theological disciplines he describes in *The Analogical Imagination*. Nor can it be said that the main public of this theological project is the academy or the church or society." Martinez, *Confronting the Mystery of God: Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies*, 221.

[980] Cf. González de Cardedal, *España por pensar*, 313.

[981] Cf. John Paul II, "*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*", accessed June 1, 2011, para. 36, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis_en.html.

### *iv. Political Manipulation*

The traditional identification between Spanish identity and Catholicism may lead to many misunderstandings in this effort to initiate theology in public. Our effort can be misused as a way to implement some kind of neo-confessionalism, or some public actors may try to politicize it to defend a partisan position.[982] It might also awake many prejudices and blind reactions in people with strong animus against the role of the Church in society. In spite of these risks, I still believe a theology done in public may very well be a constructive element to clarify these prejudices in the long term. However, this requires theology to approach religious symbols, not only to draw positive analogies, but also to apply to their interpretations some type of hermeneutic of suspicion.

In order to avoid the political manipulation of Christian discourse, it is enough to take into account a trait of Tracy's own intellectual evolution. Tracy, in dialogue with liberation and political theology, sees in the hermeneutical process the need for moments of critique of the religious classics we are analogically interpreting.[983] The exercise of the critical approach to religious classics during the process of the correlation allows us to remove the ambiguity present in their interpretation. This ambiguity takes the form of their possible

[982] "Con esos hechos en el fondo de la conciencia española, se comprende que surjan las tentaciones ya aludidas, resultado de una simplificación de la realidad y violentas respecto de lo que son la postura de la mayoría de los hombres y mujeres de España. Quienes consienten a ellas intentan llevar a cabo por un lado un *neoconfesionalismo* y por otro lado un *laicismo* de la sociedad. Uno y otro son beligerantes, ambos están dispuestos a elevarse a la categoría social-política, desde la cuál decidir lo que la sociedad española es y lo que consiguientemente los poderes políticos deben hacer." González de Cardedal, *España por pensar*, 313.

[983] "To interpret the religious classics is to allow them to challenge what we presently consider possible. To interpret them is also to allow ourselves to challenge them through every hermeneutic of critique, retrieval, and suspicion we possess. To understand them at all we must converse with them." Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity*, 84.

employment to defend partisan political positions. We have seen how this unfortunate situation has recurred many times in Spanish history.

### 4. TWO EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC THEOLOGY FOR SPAIN

Our reflections until now have remained in an abstract form. This was necessary because our proposal in this dissertation is to explore a new path and therefore seeks to remain rather open in form. Only a subsequent encounter with the reality of Spanish society when trying to put it into practice will allow us to fully develop it. However, it is necessary to outline how this public theology proposal can be implemented. As a way to provide such an outline I will now present two cases of current Spanish controversies where a public theology would be pertinent. I will then try to present how the argument may run. Nevertheless, we should be aware that the application of public theology to these cases will be highly tentative and will require further verification.

#### *a) PROPOSITIONS FOR A RENEWED FISCAL POLICY TO FACE THE ECONOMIC CRISIS*

In order to propose a concrete example of the public theology we want to develop in this dissertation, we turn to a recent episode of public debate. The different Jesuit institutions and NGOs which constitute the social apostolate of the Society of Jesus in Spain issued a document in October 2011 in order to enlighten reflection before the national elections that same year.[984] The document is called *"Crisis prolongada,*

[984] The document was drafted by the Social Apostolate Commission of the Society of Jesus and signed by institutions under the umbrella of this commission. Among these institutions are NGOs of international cooperation, institutions for the study of the migration phenomenon, associations supporting marginalized young people, social reflection centers, and institutions which offer formation and shelter to marginalized youth. All the institutions and associations are run by the Jesuits but, among their staffs, there are both believers and non-believers.

*solidaridad reforzada*" (Prolonged crisis, strengthened solidarity).[985] In this document the drafters offered 7 major proposals for evaluating certain proposed policies intended to advance justice and solidarity in Spanish society in these times of crisis.[986] The proposals address four major areas of attention during the crisis, including the struggle against social exclusion, integration of the immigrants, and international cooperation. The fourth area, a just and equal fiscal policy, represents a precondition for the continuation of the work in the other areas. Such a fiscal policy is needed in order to assure the resources for work in the other areas. The drafters stress the fact that the insights of the document are the fruit of their daily commitment and close contact with the poor, of reflection and of the experience of God's presence in these situations.[987] The document also explicitly acknowledges the inspiration of Catholic social teaching and Ignatian Spirituality.[988] The goal of the document explicitly is to "[S]hare our reflections and proposals in order to contribute to the public debate and shared reflection by the different societal, political, economic and religious actors."[989]

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[985] Apostolado Social de la Compañía de Jesús en España, "Crisis prolongada, solidaridad reforzada."

[986] These seven proposal are: a social pact for social inclusion, a vigorous welfare state where civil society has a bigger role, an immigration policy that fosters immigration, the modernization of international cooperation, a more just and progressive fiscal policy, better governance in social policies, and recovering the role of the human person as subject of development and social life. Cf. Ibid., 4–5.

[987] "El presente documento es fruto de la relación cercana con personas pobres y excluidas, de la reflexión y, sobre todo, de la experiencia honda de la presencia consoladora y esperanzadora de Dios en todas las cosas." Ibid., 2.

[988] "En él recogemos una síntesis de las reflexiones y análisis que hemos venido realizando en los últimos años junto con una recopilación de principios, inspirados en las enseñanzas sociales de la Iglesia y en la espiritualidad ignaciana, que puede ser una referencia para la necesaria revisión de las políticas." Ibid.

[989] Cf. Ibid., i.

This extremely enlightening document manages to put together the best of the experience accumulated in social activism by the various institutions of the social apostolate of the Society of Jesus. Precisely because of this more practical approach, the document does not explicitly develop the theory and inspiration behind its approach. The document remains, intentionally, at the level of principles of social life and particular recommendations. The document is, then, an example of a social science and public philosophy reflection. It reflects quite well a very common approach to social issues from the Catholic Church in contemporary secularized Spain.

Taking advantage of the experience and wisdom accumulated in this document, I would like to propose how, for future occasions – perhaps for the next national elections – the approach of this document could be developed in the form of the public theology proposals we have presented in this dissertation. Because the document is extremely comprehensive, presenting proposals in all the major fields of Spanish social life, I will focus on just one of them, the field of fiscal policies. This focus is pertinent because of the major role of fiscal policies in the present crisis – if other social policies are questioned it is only because of the lack of resources to continue them. Also, fiscal policy is a major instrument for a society to enhance the common good. The revenue raised through taxes can be used for different purposes in order to ameliorate the social situation, and the way taxes are implemented can also enhance equality and justice in society. There are conflicting ideological positions about what is a good fiscal policy for a society, and the discussion is surely not just a technical one, but one that involves ethical questions. Therefore a social consensus among the different traditions present in a society on the

principles and goals of fiscal policy will be extremely helpful in order to assure support for it. This consensus will help society to determine which goals it will embrace and to sustain them in spite of different opinions and pressures coming from exterior instances like markets.

In the section called "A fiscal policy for justice and equity" the document begins by presenting a diagnosis of the present crisis situation: a prolonged movement toward less progressive fiscal policies in the E.U.,[990] and particularly Spain, since 1995 is at the root of financial problems of the state as well as of the lack of resources to sustain other social policies. Moreover, the shift of emphasis in fiscal policy from direct taxes to consumption taxes has compromised the goal of forging a more equitable distribution of social resources.[991] It sees a certain redistribution of wealth as a major factor in advancing society's common good. The document presents four principles to review the present fiscal policy of the Spanish government: maintain and reinforce the progressivity of taxes, take into account environmental issues and sustainability when determining what to tax, international coordination of fiscal policies at least at the regional level of Europe, and a

[990] Taxes, the main instrument of a fiscal policy, could be progressive, regressive or proportional. A progressive tax is one in which the tax rate increases as the amount to which it is applied increases, a regressive tax supposes that the tax rate decreases as the amount to which it is applied increases, a proportional tax is one in which the tax rate remains the same in every case. A progressive tax rate means ultimately that more money is withdrawn from wealthier citizens in order to be redistributed by the state.

[991] Cf. Apostolado Social de la Compañía de Jesús en España, "Crisis prolongada, solidaridad reforzada," 26.

greater need for governmental efficiency. From these principles the drafters of the document draw six concrete proposals they present for public debate.[992]

The document fits very well in one of the *loci* we identified for public theology: the dialogue of NGOs within civil society. Furthermore, the spirit of the document, seeking to open a dialogue, fits the spirit of the public theology we are developing. However, in order to develop it into an explicit public theology argument as we have presented it, documents like this one need to be developed in the direction of a more explicitly theological base as well as in a more compelling message to the individual citizen. These are elements that should be present in a public-theology style approach to a social issue.

Firstly, it would be possible to start quoting some scriptural passages especially relevant to the issue of fiscal policies in Spain. One very obvious passage would be Lk 16:19-31, the parable of Lazarus and the rich man who ignores the needs of the beggar at his door. This passage could be paraphrased and partly quoted.[993] This particular passage is especially noted by Dan Harrington as a very good expression of the synoptic Gospels' call to the rich to share their wealth in order to alleviate poverty.[994] We can also accompany it with other passages from the Old and New Testaments that refer to the consequences in

[992] Cf. Ibid., 27–29. The proposals are a European fiscal union, a fiscal system that is truly progressive, the development of enviromental fiscality, fight against fiscal fraud, a tax on financial transactions, and a rationalization of public expenditures which would avoid reducing social expenses.

[993] For example: "Remember that during your lifetime you received all your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony" Lk 16:25.

[994] Cf. Daniel J. Harrington and James F. Keenan, *Jesus And Virtue Ethics: Building Bridges Between New Testament Studies and Moral Theology* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 126ff.

terms of social justice according to Biblical perspectives on justice.[995] It is also important to present some examples of the ideas which the Chistian Scriptures propose for social justice, quoting, for example, some passages from the Acts of the Apostles.[996] Because our proposal of public theology starts from David Tracy's theoretical framework, it is important to present these quotations and to expose the reader to them. This would be a faithful implementation of Tracy's position. These texts, and other possible religious symbols which we could present, are religious classics which convey a message of truth for everyone. By presenting them we allow the reader to be touched and confronted by them.

Of course, in order to achieve a rigorous approach to the texts we are presenting, the passages should be interpreted and inserted in an overarching reading of Scripture from the point of view of justice. This reading should show how in the Christian tradition the justice that Christ requires from humans includes social justice and some form of sharing of goods.[997]

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[995] For example: "Because they sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals, they who trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth," Am 2:6; "Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that has been promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor," Jas 2:5-6.

[996] "Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possession, but everything they owned was held in common," Acts 4:32.

[997] "Israel is summoned to true knowledge and true worship of God which is not simply the recognition that another person has equal rights to the goods of God's creation, but is active engagement in securing these goods for them." John R. Donahue, "Biblical Perspectives on Justice," in *The Faith That Does Justice: Examining the Christian Sources for Social Change*, ed. John C. Haughey (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2006 [orig. pub. 1977]), 108. "The cause of the poor, the hungry and the oppressed is now the cause of Jesus. He is the Son of Man, present in the least of his brethren. Christians are called on to bear one another's burdens. This is to fulfill the law of Christ, to be a just people." Ibid., 109; a very good, and authoritative synthesis of the concept of justice in the Bible can be found in United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy* (Washington D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006 [orig. pub. 1986]), pars. 28–55.

Following Tracy's framework, the religious symbols should be interpreted in light of the questions of the present human situation. In our case, the Scriptural passages we are presenting are read from a particular standpoint: the present economic crisis of Spanish society and its consequences.[998] This is the particular present Spanish situation, which is one of despair, dire economic need and terrible human consequences of the economic outcomes. In contrast with radical economic liberalism's response to the crisis, in this hermeneutical stance, Scripture becomes a call to review and strengthen the way Spanish society redistributes wealth in these times of crisis. These Scriptural insights are confirmed by other religious symbols which show how this idea of sharing goods is a major element of the Church's tradition, i.e., the collection at liturgy and the lives of many saints who have worked for the sake of the poorest.

But, also following Tracy's framework, we need to identify and adopt a criterion of relative adequacy of our interpretation of the religious symbols. The authoritative interpretation of Scripture as it is presented in Catholic social teaching might afford us this authoritative interpretation with which to confront our personal insights. Catholic social teaching presents various principles related to the redistribution of wealth in society: the principles of universal destination of the goods of Creation, the principle of solidarity and the principle of the common good.[999] Those three principles represents arguments for the

[998] "Interpretation of the Bible is always determined by the social context of the interpreter." Donahue, "Biblical Perspectives on Justice," 108.

[999] For the principle of the universal destination of goods, cf. *Centesimus Annus*, 31. For the principle of solidarity cf. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 38-40. For the principle of the common good cf. *Mater et Magistra*, 65. A systematic synthesis of this principles can be found in Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, "Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church," 164–170; 171–184; and 192–196.

redistribution of wealth in a society in search of higher equality. It is from this standpoint that we can present a concrete proposal for fiscal policies as the document conveys. They would be proposals derived from the Christian tradition in order to adjust Spanish fiscal policies to these times of crisis.

The discussion regarding fiscal policy can easily drift toward a partisan political discussion and can be seen as a way for the Catholic Church to seek influence in politics. Therefore, it is important to include in the document a warning against biased employment of the religious classics. It might be good to recall possible faulty understandings in the past. It should be clear that we seek to be enlightened by the message the classics convey to us and not to manipulate them.

We should mention, in addition, that there should be some minimums to our discussion on fiscal policy. There is already some consensus on this issue as it is expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights regarding the economic needs of the person (art. 23 and 25). We may also mention the 1978 Spanish Constitution which calls Spain a "social state." In this sense, our public theology conversation should start from these previous standpoints.

The drafters of the document stated that their goal was to initiate a dialogue with other societal, political, economic and religious actors. This goal expresses very well the goal of our public theology. Therefore, the document should be seen as a conversation starter addressed to other social, cultural and religious traditions. After the publication of such a document, other points of contact and communication with other traditions should

be sought in order to continue the conversation we have sparked here. Because we are reflecting from within David Tracy's method of public theology, the act of making explicit our own sources, as I propose to be done in future documents, becomes very important. This explicit use of sources helps the dialogue and allows the other traditions to probe their own resources through an analogical imagination after receiving the Christian insights on the subject. However, it would be possible to spark the dialogue by including in the document some possible analogies of these insights in the other traditions. Examples might include invoking the tradition of the *Zakât* for Muslims[1000] and other non-Catholic examples such as solidarity among workers in trade unions. This does not mean that we impose these connection upon the other tradition, but that we suggest to them possible ways to appropriate in their own tradition the insights of our document.

After this first level, which I present as a conversation starter with other traditions present in Spanish society, I suggest completing the argument with a second more concrete level that corresponds to Valadier's anthropological framework. In Valadier's terms, the level at which the document formulates the principles and suggestions – the level of national policies – risks causing moral despair and nihilism. As Valadier points out, impossible or unreachable moral ideals produce in the individual a sensation of powerlessness and make him lose the will to lead a more ethical life. Therefore, it would

[1000]"Alms (*zakat*) are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the (funds): for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to Truth); for those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of Allah; and for the wayfarer." Q 9:60. "[T]he alms-tax, one of the principal obligations of Islâm. By this the law means a tax which is levied on definite kinds of property and is distributed to eight categories of persons." H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, eds., "Zakât," *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 654.

be important to suggest how the approach we are proposing will enlighten the individuals in their own processes of decision making.

Each citizen, by function of his role in society, is affected differently by the proposal we are making. The position of each citizen should be enlightened by the full conversation we seek to start with this document. Nevertheless, it would be important to briefly present the different possible responsibilities of each social group regarding our views on fiscal policy.[1001] This should be done in a way that awakens in the individual a desire to contribute, to accomplish something, in order to address the social problem behind the document: the dire consequences of the economic crisis. The document could invite those who are active in politics to review the present laws or advocate for a renewal, the leaders of civil society associations to raise their voices in favor of just measures in terms of fiscal policies, the citizens to judge the different political proposals by the principles we are proposing and voting in line with this judgment; the citizens also to seek a higher commitment in politics or civil society if they conclude that something else should be done.

Therefore, the voice of the Church in such an important issue for the common good as the principles of fiscal policy appropriate for this time of crisis can be developed in the framework of the public theology we are proposing in this dissertation. The position of the Church can be presented as a conversation starter that can foster a further conversation in society with other traditions. This position can be proposed drawing explicitly from

[1001] This was already done in the U.S. bishop's documents of the 1980s. Cf. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy*, pars. 96–124.

religious symbols, taking them as the enlightenment of the other reasons proposed. The document would propose an interpretation of these symbols in light of the present Spanish situation which produces a concrete proposal in this issue of fiscal policies. This proposal would be the starting point of a subsequent social conversation. Already the document will point out the way different individual situations are confronted by the reflections we are making, and how they are invited to contribute to change the situation. The approach we propose here is fully in line with the original version of the document *CrisisProlongada, Solidaridad Reforzada,* however I believe the approach we present here can make its argumentation richer and more appropriate for the present pluralism of Spanish society.

*b) Starting a Pluralistic Dialogue about Educational Centers of Social Initiative*

Another compelling case in the Spanish social milieu in which to implement the public theology we are proposing in this dissertation involves the discussion about the role of educational centers of religious inspiration in the educational system. The Spanish educational system is a mixed system where we find three types of educational centers: centers of public initiative and public funding (run by the government), centers of social initiative and public founding (run by civil society groups but funded by the government), and centers of private initiative and private funding (run by private groups and paid for as any other product in the market).[1002] Most of the centers in the category of centers of social initiative and public funding are Catholic, and this reflects the presence that the Catholic

[1002] Cf. Editorial Board, "La enseñanza de la religión en la escuela. Una solución posible," *Revista de Fomento Social*, no. 59 (2004): 22–23.

Church has historically had in the Spanish educational system. A good example is the Jesuit network of free primary schools created between the 16th and 18th centuries. This historical presence was integrated in the 1978 Constitution's juridical framework through the form of state funding of some Catholic schools. This state support of Catholic schools assures all citizens the right to freedom of education that the Constitution demands regardless of their economic income. Nevertheless, because of the support the state gives to these educational centers, it also demands from them certain requirements that assure that they meet the national standards.

The present situation seeks a balance between two rights present in the 1978 Constitution: the right of every citizen to quality education regardless of her economic situation – a right that should be assured by the state – and the right to freedom of teaching (both rights are formulated in art. 27.1). This right is developed in the same article as the freedom of individuals and associations to create educational centers (art. 27.6).[1003] In spite of these clear guidelines, because of historical reasons, the presence of religious centers in the educational system is still controverted. In some un-believing *milieux* there is a strong prejudice against this presence.[1004] Religious initiative in the educational system is

[1003] Cf. Editorial Board, "La enseñanza de iniciativa social. Razones y desafíos," *Revista de Fomento Social*, no. 56 (2001): 27.

[1004] Some un-believing groups claim that education should be completely in the hands of the state as the Constitution of the 2º Republic stated, cf. Editorial Board, "La enseñanza de la religión en la escuela. Una solución posible"; others react against an excessive and ideological dependence of Franco's regime upon educational centers run by the Catholic Church. This damaged the public educational system, cf. Editorial Board, "La enseñanza de iniciativa social. Razones y desafíos," 18–20.

portrayed by some observers as sectarian or contrary to modern values and it is also considered a hindrance to the universal offer of education by the state.[1005]

Although today the presence of religious centers in the educational system is not questioned, nevertheless determining what level of funding they need is still a strong controversy. Moreover, the debate has recently taken a new turn. Apart from the debate about the proper funding of the needs of these centers today, there is a new debate about the exemptions from the educational standards that these centers may be granted as concession. On the one hand, the morals of Spanish society today are drifting apart from the morals of the Catholic Church. Therefore, Catholic educational centers may insist upon offering teachings which differ significantly from those demanded by the state in public schools in order to present a coherent Catholic view. On the other hand, the growing Muslim communities in Spain are starting to demand an education which is in harmony with Muslim tradition. As Catholics have historically done, Muslims may want to create educational centers funded by the state to assure their accessibility by every citizen regardless of their income. This will raise issues regarding what types of teaching are acceptable in centers funded by the state. In the case of future Muslim schools, teaching about the connection between religion and politics, freedom of religion or the role of women in society will surely become controversial.

All this is a natural outgrowth of the growing moral, cultural and religious pluralism of Spanish society.[1006] Therefore, in order to find a stable and widely accepted solution

[1005] This position represents a Spanish version of the traditional French republican views on education that Valadier criticizes. Cf. Valadier, *Détresse du politique, force du religieux*, 111–114.

beyond particular partisan views, a social dialogue needs to be started. The situation requires a social agreement regarding the presence of religions in the Spanish educational system. It is necessary to agree on the contribution of these centers to the common good, so the historical controversy about their role is settled. It is also necessary to agree on the exemptions to the content of the formation that can be offered to accommodate the different religious traditions. The issue does not refer just to a struggle to retain influence for the Church in society but is important in terms of the common good of Spanish society. The possibility for every tradition in society to take initiatives in the educational system is an important element for establishing a healthy and peaceful pluralism. Moreover, it seeks to acknowledge the major role of civil society in any given nation.

For example, in 2006 the Spanish government introduced in the educational system a new subject called "education for citizenship." This new subject received strong critiques for promoting views on social and sexual morals that suppose a particular view of society at variance with the Catholic position. After some negotiation, Catholic schools receiving funding from the government were allowed to teach this subject, adapting it to the views of the Catholic Church.[1007] Similar situations will surely occur often in relationship with possible future Muslim primary and secondary schools in Spain.

These types of debates present potentially excellent opportunities to apply our public theology approach. The *locus* for this application of public theology would be

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[1006] Cf. Editorial Board, "La enseñanza de iniciativa social. Razones y desafíos," 23.

[1007] For a good overview on this issue, cf. Editorial Board, "Ciudadanía y educación: Desafíos, incógnitas y posibilidades," *Revista de Fomento Social*, no. 62 (2007): 151–177.

probably be either governmental committees created to discuss this issue or meetings between representatives of the different traditions present in the educational system. It is not hard to recognize this *locus* as close to Valadier's "experts committees."

To argue in such a social discussion we can begin by making explicit our own sources in the Christian tradition. Although I am aware that a more subtle and nuanced use of Scripture is desirable, I will here just outline a possible use of it in our argument. We can first convey some texts from Paul that point out how the Biblical and Christian understanding of justice supposes reconciliation and harmony in society.[1008] This reconciliation will be complete only in the Kingdom to come.[1009] This means that justice demands that we establish right relationships in society. In the Christian tradition among these right relationships is the one that gives family a priority role in the formation of children. This role of the family is widely present in Scripture.[1010] The social tradition of the Church has interpreted this as a priority for parents to choose their child's education and

[1008] "Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom 5:1. "For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us." Eph 2:14. Paul is reinterpreting here the wisdom tradition of the Old Testament that sees justice as linked with right relationships and producing peace: "The father of righteousness will greatly rejoice; he who begets a wise son will be glad in him." Prov 23:24.

[1009] "[I]n the Old Testament one effect of the realization of the justice of God is that peace (shalom), wholeness and harmony are to reign, we can see that the reconciled world is a world where peace and harmony are to prevail." Donahue, "Biblical Perspectives on Justice," 93–94.

[1010] For example: "You shall tell your child on that day, 'it is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt,'" Ex 13:8; "for I have told him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them," 1 Sam 3:13; "hear, my child, your father's instruction, and do not reject your mother's teaching," Prov 1:8; "then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart," Lk 2: 51.

their right to support and fund educational institution to do so.[1011] The Catholic social tradition frames this role of family in a wider perspective. It reminds us of the principle of subsidiarity which supports the priority of civil society's initiative over the state's in education as a way to foster society's dynamism and pluralism.[1012] The state should intervene where civil society cannot cope with the needs of the citizens, but it should not suffocate civil's society initiative. These arguments demand a negotiation about the necessary exemptions and adaptations for every religious tradition to offer a teaching faithful to its beliefs, and about the necessary limits to those exemptions in order to receive public funding.

These insights of the Christian tradition are supported by a general consensus on the issue. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms the right of parents to determine the education of their children (art. 26), and the 1978 Spanish Constitution states the "freedom of teaching" (art. 27). However, in spite of these high-level assertions, the precise way of enacting these principles becomes very controversial. Witness the ongoing debate about the actual role and authority of the family in the education of children and about the freedom of children themselves.[1013]

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[1011] Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, "Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church," pars. 240–241.

[1012] Cf. "*Quadragesimo Anno*," para. 80; "todo esto [el estado] ha de hacerlo en el espíritu de la subsidiariedad... ha de contar con la iniciativa de la sociedad, ante todo respetándola (como es propio del estado liberal); pero además encauzándola y haciéndola efectiva (según los imperativos del estado social)." Editorial Board, "La enseñanza de iniciativa social. Razones y desafíos," 25.

[1013] Cf. Mary M. Doyle Roche, *Children, Consumerism, and the Common Good* (Plymouth, U.K.: Lexington Books, 2009), 49–79; cf. also Holy See, "Charter of the Rights of the Family," *United States Conference of*

The insights of the Christian tradition, read in light of the present Spanish situation, motivate us to present proposals oriented toward an enhanced freedom for the Catholic Church to implement its views in teaching. It will also support proper state funding of these initiatives in order to assure it accessibility. In order to present concrete proposals, it will be necessary to draw from the experience of those working in Catholic educational centers. In light of the insights from Scripture and its interpretation, the representatives of the Catholic position on possible governmental committees or other encounters on the topic should then present concrete proposals and suggestions to the representatives of communities which represent the non-believing positions as well as to Muslims communities.

The subsequent conversation will follow paths that are impossible to predict in advance; nevertheless, it is possible to foster it. Thinking within Tracy's framework, in order to help the other traditions to develop their own analogical imagination on the issue it is possible to recall some insights from the Muslim tradition which reaffirm the role of families in the education of children,[1014] as well as historical examples of education established in a particular line by civil associations of non-believers in Spain like the *Institución Libre de Enseñanaza*.[1015]

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*Catholic Bishops - Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth*, accessed April 23, 2012, http://old.usccb.org/laity/marriage/charterfamily.shtml.

[1014] For example: "Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them but address them, in terms of honour. And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them they Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood." Q 17:23-24.

[1015] The *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (Free Teaching Institution) was a pedagogical center supported by a civil society movement inspired in the philosophy of Karl Christian Friedrich Krause. It was open from 1876

The dialogue may be tense due to strong historical prejudices in some contexts against the role of the Catholic Church in education. Muslims may also complain about a supposedly privileged position of the Catholic Church in the educational juridical framework. This will require a way of arguing in which we could underline the contribution that Catholic education has historically provided for Spanish society. We should also feel accountable for the limitations of that presence and try to respond to the possible critiques.

Following Valadier's views on moral theology, the message should be addressed to each interlocutor in function of her role and reminding each societal actor of his responsibility in the effort. To the politicians we should recall their role as policy makers; it is their duty to design policies which seek the common good of society beyond any ideological perspective. To interlocutors from other traditions, we should further recall their role of seeking the common good and considering appropriately other people's proposals. This proposal should be made in such a way that we address the different groups reminding them of the contribution they can make to a common problem: the search for a healthy pluralism in society. As Valadier asserts, the goal should be to awaken a desire to do something. The position each dialogue partner will finally take will be determined by the full development of the conversation and the light it can shed on this issue.

A public theology approach to this historical debate in Spanish society about the role of religious initiative in the educational system may very well help us overcome past prejudices and introduce a new perspective. The more explicitly religious approach

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until 1936 and it formed some of the major personalities of Spanish culture in the 20th century. Cf. Díaz-Salazar, *España laica*, 246–247.

supposes a recognition of the pluralism of positions the dialogue partners hold. Since they do have a different view, we should fully share ours. This approach integrates better the Muslim voices and may show more clearly that the Church is not merely seeking influence in society in a self-interested way. The public theology way of arguing also helps us focus explicitly and thoroughly more on the arguments at the bottom of our position: the defense of social pluralism for the sake of the common good. Because of the complex history behind this controversy in Spain, this case may also test the capacity of public theology to present the point we are making in the midst of a more conflictual debate.

## 5. Conclusion

In the foregoing, we have identified the circumstances of the Spanish situation, a society where a common morality needs to be built through the dialogue among Catholics, other Christians, un-believers and Muslims. It is at the present moment a society that needs to develop a new pluralistic identity in order to overcome a problematic historical identification with Catholicism. In these circumstances I propose making the effort to bring theology into public as part of a strategy to find new ways for the Church to be present in society. What is needed are new ways which break with past identifications of church and society but which, at the same time, give voice to the Church and religion in society.

The most promising way to bring theology into public may be by encouraging dialogue in society between the different cultural communities. The analogical imagination will be a resource for participating in these discussions, for it is a technique that allows us to introduce the full richness of religious symbols into the discussion. This holds the promise

of giving religion the public role we are seeking for it. This will also help us to hold a discussion that is fully open to religious interpretations of Western secular political concepts, as many Muslims demand. This openness may answer the demand among many Muslims to introduce their own religious richness into the building of modern societies. This discussion will not remain abstract or vague; proper *loci* can readily be found for it. From these *loci* this discussion will help to develop a common morality fully worthy of a pluralistic society which consists of partners who can help form others' conscience in order to help one another decide about the different moral cases which modern societies presents us. We have seen how this public theology proposal may function in cases of discussions about fiscal policies in Spain and about the presence of religious initiative centers in the Spanish educational system. Each case provides ample illumination of the possibilities of a constructive employment of public theology in contemporary Spain.

As previously indicated, this theology brought into the public sphere should not be the only available resource to discuss ethical issues. The richness of the Church's tradition offers us other very valuable resources, such as the tradition of natural law or virtue ethics. In some cases, these other ways of arguing ethical issues will be more adequate than a public theology. At bottom we are just mediating, correlating, the Christian symbols and social reality in different ways. However, there will be situations where the best way, or even the only way, of arguing will be by means of a public theology. Moreover, the use and implementation of this way of arguing is implicitly leading us and our dialogue partners to new understandings of the church–society relationship. It may also lead us to a new

understanding of Christian identity. Spain is in dire need of these new ways because of its complex history in terms of religion and the presence and role of the Church.

Allow me to recall at this point the reflection I introduced at the end of the first chapter. In both cases we have presented in this chapter, the issue at stake is not the influence or privileges of the Church but the common good. The public theology approach I have proposed for them helps the Church, without imposing its view, to fully and clearly express its position on the topic. Therefore, the development of a constructive public theology in contemporary Spanish society, the goal of this work, is not a way to impose a distinctive Catholic view on society or to shy away from social problems. The public theology proposal we present in this work is rather a way to actually empower the Catholic Church, and, perhaps even, other Christian denominations, to intervene in a significant and proper way in modern religiously and morally pluralistic Spain.

# CONCLUSION

Now that we have navigated the successive stages of the methodology I chose for this dissertation, and now that we have formulated the synthesis of the public theology I propose, it is time to ponder the path we have trod. In order to do so let us first return to the question we posed at the beginning of this dissertation: How can contemporary Christianity, especially the Catholic Church, publicly address social issues by drawing insights directly from our faith and religious symbols in modern Spanish society? The fruits of our reflection throughout the dissertation have attempted to answer this question.

## I. RESULTS OF OUR RESEARCH

In our first chapter we approached the work of various U.S. authors identified as public theologians in the U.S. theological milieu. We studied the origin of this idea of a theology done in public as well as a range of authors claiming to engage in a public theology. What we call public theology represents mainly a style of theology which seeks to speak to society about social issues with theological arguments that can be understood by the various social agents. Inside this broad style we identified a group of Catholic authors forming a more cohesive group, thanks to the particular sources they were using as well as to their use of David Tracy's critical-correlational method as inspiration for their work.

In the second chapter we took up the work of the French Jesuit Paul Valadier on church-society relationships. After presenting its main traits we compared it to the U.S. public theology current. We saw how Paul Valadier can be called a public theologian, understanding this in a broad sense as a theological style. Thus, Paul Valadier would be a

public theologian working in a disenchanted social milieu. We then compared it to our major reference in the public theology current, David Tracy. We realized the improvement that David Tracy represents in terms of mediation of Christian symbols and narratives but, at the same time, we realized the contribution that Paul Valadier brings with his more nuanced understanding of pluralism and his anthropology based on decision.

In the third chapter we faced the challenge of a public theology undertaken in countries with Muslim communities. We first approached the thought of five Islamic social thinkers. We identified two tendencies among these thinkers: those able to confront the roots of their Islamic traditions, the radicals, and those unable to do so, the culturals. Both groups would imaginably be open to a social dialogue based on public theology, although the cultural authors would have more problems with this. When reflecting on the actual way to argue in a public theology style, I proposed to continue taking David Tracy's analogical imagination as the foundation of our public theology. Tracy's model allows the public theology discussion to remain open to theological consideration respecting the inner dynamics of any interreligious encounter. However, I also suggested that Tracy's model should be completed with the setting of some preconditions for the dialogue, namely fulfilling the category of public religion, and establishing a goal to seek in the dialogue, namely the pluralistic common good.

Finally, in our fourth chapter we studied the Spanish case of religious pluralism in its historical, juridical and sociological dimensions. We identified how the conditions of Spanish history and society determine a situation of cultural identity crisis. There is a need

to reach new common understandings of Spanish culture that are detached from Catholicism. This requires a dialogue of cultures inside Spanish society. I then formulated my proposal of a theology done in public in Spain as the way for the Catholic Church in Spain to participate in this dialogue of cultures. This public theology will be based on David Tracy's critical-correlational method inserted into Paul Valadier's anthropology based as it is on conscience. This method will also be improved with some pre-conditions and a particular goal in order to be suitable to dialogue with Muslim positions. This proposal of public theology proves to have resources to answer the major challenges that the Spanish social situation poses to it. We presented an outline of a possible implementation of our proposal when studying two different cases of possible social dialogues in contemporary Spanish society: the debate about the proper fiscal policies in order to face the economic crisis and the debate about the role and conditions of the educational centers of religious inspiration in Spain's educational system.

Therefore, we have tried to answer the question we posed at the beginning of this work: how can the Catholic Church appropriately intervene in modern Spanish society on social issues drawing from its main symbols and narratives? To answer this question I have proposed an implementation of Tracy's critical-correlational model through the anthropological and social vision that Paul Valadier offers us and framed it in a way suitable to engage the Muslim tradition in the social debate. As we have seen in the cases proposed, such an approach seems to have resources to respond to the challenges that the Spanish social context poses and to offer a new way for the Church to voice its position in contemporary pluralistic Spain.

The results of our research are still tentative, and they represent only a proposal. However, I believe that in the future it may very well be a new and fresh way for the Catholic Church to intervene in modern Spanish society, a way that can answer some of the questions present among Spanish social ethicists about the best way for the church to address social issues from its own Christian sources. I hope this modest contribution to the present Spanish social ethics debate may be a first step in a direction that will encourage others to continue treading.

## II. OPEN QUESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Because, as I have said, our efforts in this dissertation seek to open up a new path, our reflections pose a good number of questions that I can only mention briefly here because of the limits of the dissertation. I will now try to formulate the major remaining questions in order to flag them for future development.

First, one important remaining question is related to a critique of public theology made from an opposite theological position. What is the Christian identity that a public theology supposes? The work of Alasdair MacIntyre in *After Virtue,* developed theologically by Stanley Hauerwas, focuses on Christian identity and Christian community as an answer to the dangers of fragmentation they identify in modern pluralism.[1016] We have seen how this theological trend has now been received in Spain as a useful contribution in times of strong secularism. When confronted with this current, public theology's main asset is its willingness and ability to address society outside the church, while maintaining the

[1016] There is a clear intellectual link between the position of these authors and George Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic model of theology. Cf. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*.

Christian identity of the message. However, I believe we should learn something from this other theological current: the subject that argues is as important as the way of arguing itself.[1017] Especially in contexts of strong secularism like European societies, public theologians can be accused of being very much concerned with the way they address the other, but guilty of forgetting about the identity of the one who dialogues. This way the Christian identity may seem to become blurred in the dialogue and be unable to reaffirm Christian faith in secularist contexts.

We can find the resources to face this critique in the approach we have proposed here. Properly developed, public theology's approach may present a strong claim: ultimately we only get to know ourselves by opening up to the others. Our identity is shaped by our relationships with the others, as our identity is ultimately relational.[1018] Drawing from the resources offered to us by the authors we have considered, David Tracy, Paul Valadier and others, we can think of developing the idea of a theology done in public into a reflection on Christian identity. The goal would be to present a Christian public identity based on relationships with others.

This issue of an open and public Christian identity will be very important for example in the case of Catholic NGOs trying to present their position in society. This

[1017] Kristin Heyer has reflected also on the way the Tracian approach has introduced over time a more marked concern for identity in dialogue with George Lindbeck's views. Cf. Heyer, "How Does Theology Go Public? Rethinking the Debate Between David Tracy and George Lindbeck."

[1018] Cf. General Congregation 35 of the Society of Jesus, Decree 2, paragraph 19. Paul Valadier has similar reflections, for example: "[O]n comprend alors, d'une part, que la foi chrétienne se perd dans l'insignifiance à ne pas rencontrer l'autre, mais, d'autre part, qu'elle a quelque chance de trouver son identité, sa force et sa fermeté dans cette rencontre même." Valadier, *Jésus-Christ ou Dionysos*, 18.

situation supposes a tension for the NGOs between being persuasive for the secularized society in their discourse and presenting clearly their Christian identity. The case we have presented about the debate on fiscal policies has shown us an example of how different Jesuit NGOs try to intervene in the social debate through a common document. When proposing how a possible future document would be shaped, we have seen how it is possible to retain the concreteness and experience accumulated in the original document and introduce a solid foundation in Christian symbols. This is already an example of how public theology can offer a way to retain both poles of the tension together.

Second, another important question that remains is the actual articulation between natural law and public theology. Because we have seen how both types of argument are necessary and are actually being used in the social discourse of the church, it would be important to find an overarching rationale that helps us understand when and how to pass from one type of argument to the other. Public theology is a very demanding way of arguing, for it insists upon being able to sustain a dialogue on social issues open to deeper theological questions with other religions and unbelievers in theological terms. This requires openness to the other, creativity and a solid knowledge of one's own tradition. Because of these requirements, at points it may be easier to dialogue within the framework of natural law, which has the advantages of not demanding that we open the dialogue to more theological questions. In fact some Muslim thinkers like Sachedina seem to lean toward this idea.

Public theology arose in the light of Vatican II's discretion about natural law. This explains why there has not been much reflection on the connection between these two approaches. However, today natural law, after a proper study, has become once again a viable way to argue and the Church's magisterium is reaffirming its use. Moreover, in some topics, we can easily agree on the need for the Church to state strongly the moral authority of a position – something the natural law tradition can do very well. A public theology argument will always tend more to merely offer a proposition or a suggestion to society. That is the case, for example, with the moral evaluation of issues like the limits, conditions and orientation of a market economy.[1019] Therefore, there is need for a fundamental theology framework in which to integrate these two resources of dialogue so we can use each method as the situation demands from us.

Jean Porter understands natural law as influenced by a particular religious tradition. For her it is a dialectic between "accepted moral precepts and practices" and "the natural and scriptural bases of those beliefs and customs, interpreting and reformulating it in the light of their best understanding of the other."[1020] This understanding, close to Tracy's analogical imagination, supports Julio Martínez's thesis of the natural law as another way to mediate Christian symbols and social life alternatives to public theology.[1021] This line of reflection could lead us to an overarching fundamental theology which could integrate public

[1019] Cf. "*Caritas in Veritate*," para. 35ff.

[1020] Porter, *Natural and Divine Law*, 309; for a good account of modern debates on natural law cf. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology in the Twentieth Century*, 173–178.

[1021] Cf. Martínez, *"Consenso público" y moral social*, 501ff.

theology and natural law as two forms of mediation between faith and society. However, this understanding is not accepted by everyone and it requires further research.[1022]

The need for connecting the tradition of natural law and the public theology approach becomes more evident when we see the concrete cases we have presented. In both cases, the debate on fiscal policies and the debate on religious educational centers, we employ the social tradition of the Church as an official interpretation by the community of the insights coming from the religious symbols. Our argument is also in dialogue with the human rights tradition. In both Catholic social teaching and human rights tradition there are often appeals to natural law reasoning in order to present a statement. The clearest example is the argument of human dignity, a key argument in Catholic social teaching and the human rights tradition. Therefore, in spite of the lack of positive reception of the natural law tradition in modern secular thought, there is still the need to take it into account and open our reflection to its insights.

Third, in terms of the actual implementation of public theology, it is not clear how our dialogue partners will receive and process our discourse. In the case of unbelievers there is more experience of dialogue (although there still remains an abundance of misunderstanding). However, we are unsure how Muslims will receive and appropriate our arguments. We already mentioned the example of the concept of common good. It is possible to identify many connections between this concept and several Muslim concepts,

[1022] James Keenan reflects the debate between Jean Porter and Lisa Cahill on natural law. Lisa Cahill responds critically to Porter's position asserting the possibility of universal claims in natural law. Cf. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology in the Twentieth Century*, 176–177.

but it is up to them to establish the analogy and assume it. We cannot determine on our own the outcome of this conversation. There is then a need to start to put this public theology approach into practice in the dialogue with Muslims to test its actual possibilities and limits.

The two cases we have presented suggest possible points of connection with Muslims which would allow them to discover resources in their own tradition to understand our proposals. Thus, we spoke about Muslim *Zakât* as a source of light when thinking about fiscal policies and we mentioned several quotations from the *Qur'ân* which stress the role of parents in the education of their children. However, we can only open the conversation and then it is up to Muslims themselves to find the best analogies in their tradition for the points we are making. It is then necessary to actually start the conversation on these two issues we mentioned in order to realize the genuine possibilities of connection that are there.

Fourth, it is important to insure that this theology done in public integrates well the principle of "preferential option for the poor." This major element of the Christian tradition was highlighted and revived by liberation theology.[1023] The option for the poor is now an indispensable trait, and a test, of any theology. A theology that truly aspires to be a *theo-logos,* a discourse about God, should lead us to adopt a preferential option for the poor as God himself does. This insight has recently explicitly become part of the Church's

[1023] "The 'preferential option for the poor' was articulated by Gustavo Gutiérrez. While there was no such concept before the 1960s, today it is a constitutive part of the moral theological tradition of the Roman Catholic community and has normative claims on us." Ibid., 87.

*magisterium*.[1024] The proposal we are presenting here contains ample resources to develop a preferential option for the poor. For Tracy, in our contemporary world, the situations of oppression and the memory of those suffering pose in us the fundamental questions with which we interpret the religious classics.[1025] Valadier sees these situations of injustice as the motivations that set the conscience in motion.[1026] However, it is important to develop this dimension properly in order to assure that our proposal will be a means to awaken and support the work and toil required to ameliorate the situation of the poor in this world.

For example, in the case of the debate over fiscal policies, it is not clear if the society-wide discussion will remain focused on the needs of the poor and the unemployed caused by the economic crisis. There is always a risk of staying at the level of a general accord between traditions that avoids conflict without really advocating for the needs of the poor. In spite of being at the root of the religious traditions, care for the poor may be overshadowed by other concerns if it is not properly represented. It is necessary then to assure that the call to care for the poor is clearly reflected in the debate.

Fifth, another question that remains is how to negotiate the social significance of each religious and cultural group in a pluralistic society. Our proposal of public theology aspires

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[1024] "*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*," para. 42; for a concise account of the reception of the "option for the poor" in Catholic teaching, cf. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology in the Twentieth Century*, 87.

[1025] Cf. Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity*, 87; "[S]o too should Christian theology, in its distinct turn to the other, especially, but not solely, the oppressed, repressed, and marginal other, make the contemporary turn-to-the-subject, the starting point, not conclusion, of all genuine Christian thought." David Tracy, "The Christian Option for the Poor," in *The Option for the Poor in Christian Theology*, ed. Daniel G. Groody (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 120.

[1026] Cf. Valadier, *Éloge de la conscience*, 151–152.

to open a space in the social dialogue for religious symbols and offer us a way to argue and receive arguments in these same religious terms. This would allow Muslims to make a richer contribution to the social dialogue. It will also suppose a way to integrate non-believers, considering them another cultural community. However, it is clear that the actual balance of forces of these three groups in the Spanish society is not equal, and it would not make sense to consider them as starting from the same position. How then can we take into account the different social significance of religious and cultural groups in society in a way that is realistic but nevertheless remains open to dialogue and open to change in the future as the presence of religions changes?

For example, in the case of the debate about the role and conditions of the educational centers of religious inspiration, it is clear that the role of the Catholic Church and the role of the Muslim communities cannot be the same. The Catholic Church represents a much larger group of the population and it represents also a centuries-old tradition of education in Spain. If Muslim communities finally open schools appropriate to their tradition, it will be a real novelty in Spain and it will represent a rather small part of the population. The discussion on the role of religious educational centers should reflect realistically this fact and the different traditions cannot be artificially homogenized.

Finally, a question that remains to be answered is how to build a public theology argument with a strong presence of social science reflection. The proposal for public theology we are presenting here considers the role of social sciences: their data describes for us the conditions of the human situation we want to correlate with the Christian

symbols. The religious classic, through the analogical imagination, dialogues with the questions that spring from this human situation. However, there is still need to make this connection more concrete. I am considering here especially the relationship between public theology and such a technical social science as economics. In the future the effort of theology in the public sphere should prove that it is capable of integrating in its entire rigor the results of social science. Only by accomplishing this will the final argument be compelling. There is a need then of sharpening the connection between theology and social science inside the critical-correlational model we are taking here as the basis of our reflection.

This question is very clear in the case of the debate on fiscal policies. For any public theology argument to be compelling on this issue, it has to be solidly rooted in economics, otherwise it will be considered just wishful thinking. This requires a very good articulation between the message conveyed by the religious symbols we bring to the discussion and the economic and political conclusions we draw from them. This passage from Scripture to economic theory is not readily evident and requires a good argumentation. David Tracy shows the way to proceed in this but his guidance remains more at the theological level. Only the actual engagement in conversations on economic issues will allow us to fully unfold the connections between the religious insights and the economic principles.

## III. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the final words of this dissertation I would like to turn to the work done by Spanish theologians since the Second Vatican Council as they have attempted to enlighten social

and political life. One of the conclusions of our reflection is that what we have called public theology is, in fact, a broad theological category, a style of theology, in which we can count various non-U.S. authors who have not embraced this terminology. We saw, for example, how Paul Valadier could be considered a public theologian *avant la lettre.* When approaching the Spanish post-Vatican II theological production in my final chapter, I was surprised to find various authors who had developed an approach to theology which could fit perfectly well into our idea of public theology. The works of Olegario González de Cardedal as well as Alfonso Álvarez Bolado are paradigmatic of what I am saying. What is more, the Spanish bishops issued a document in 1973 called *The Church and the Political Community* (*La Iglesia y la Comunidad Política)*[1027] which exhibited an enormous relevance in the subsequent Spanish transition to democracy. This document, fruit of the 1971 assembly of priests and bishops, is also a very fine example of a theology done in public, this time as part of the *magisterium* of the Church. My approach to the Spanish case revealed to me how the work of these theologians was key in the Catholic Church's contribution to the end of Franco's dictatorship and to the transition process to democracy in Spain. I cannot think of a more appropriate example of the benefits of bringing theology into the public sphere for the common good of society. Although my proposal in this dissertation draws from other sources than these authors, the ultimate inspiration is similar. My hope is that my efforts in this work will be useful in furthering the work of these previous public-theology-prophetic voices in Spain.

[1027] This document may be found in the website of the Spanish Episcopal Conference, Conferencia Episcopal Española, "Documentos CEE", accessed March 28, 2012, http://www.conferenciaepiscopal.nom.es/archivodoc/jsp/system/win_main.jsp.

I described in the introduction the present Spanish theological debate about possible ways for the church to be present in public life. The work of these Spanish public theologians during the 70's and 80's should be an indispensable point of reference in this debate. Although my proposal in this dissertation draws from different sources, it could be understood as a renewed interpretation of this heritage in the light of present Spanish cultural and religious pluralism. It is from this intellectual position that I want to contribute to this present debate about the relationship between society and theology in 21st-century Spain.

Let us conclude with a wink to Spanish literature. In Cervantes' second part of *Don Quijote de la Mancha,* at a certain moment in the plot, Don Quixote guides Sancho at night through the village of El Toboso looking for the "palace" of his beloved Dulcinea. While walking in the streets of the village, they happen to see a building in the shadows. Thinking it to be the palace, they drew close to it and recognized the large tower of the village's church. Don Quixote utters then this famous sentence to Sancho: "Con la iglesia hemos dado, Sancho" (We have bumped into the church, Sancho).[1028] Although the original context of the phrase has no *double entendre* at all, the phrase lives on as a popular proverb in Spanish. The proverb refers to instances when the Catholic Church becomes a topic of controversy. In these cases the discussion tends to end with an authoritative statement of some Church official. This expression reflects quite well the way most interventions of the Catholic Church in public life are perceived in Spanish society. Our approach to Spanish

[1028] Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, ed. Florencio Sevilla and Antonio Rey, vol. 2 (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1996), 728.

history allows us to understand better the many reasons that have led to this appreciation of the Church's position. However, the efforts we are presenting in this work seek to develop an alternative way of understanding the place of the Church in Spanish society. This dissertation aspires to help the Church to be perceived no longer as an obstacle against which we bump, but as a partner in a common dialogue for the common good of the Spanish society.

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